



A Student's Introduction to **English Grammar**

Second Edition

Rodney Huddleston, Geoffrey K. Pullum
and Brett Reynolds

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SECOND EDITION

A new edition of a successful undergraduate textbook on contemporary international Standard English grammar, based on Huddleston and Pullum's earlier award-winning work, *The Cambridge Grammar of the English Language* (2002). The analyses defended there are outlined here more briefly, in an engagingly accessible and informal style. Errors of the older tradition of English grammar are noted and corrected, and the excesses of prescriptive usage manuals are firmly rebutted in specially highlighted notes that explain what older authorities have called 'incorrect' and show why those authorities are mistaken. Intended for students in colleges or universities who have little or no background in grammar or linguistics, this teaching resource contains numerous exercises and online resources suitable for any course on the structure of English in either linguistics or English departments. A thoroughly modern undergraduate textbook, rewritten in an easy-to-read conversational style with a minimum of technical and theoretical terminology.

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CAMBRIDGE
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University Printing House, Cambridge CB2 8BS, United Kingdom

One Liberty Plaza, 20th Floor, New York, NY 10006, USA

477 Williamstown Road, Port Melbourne, VIC 3207, Australia

314–321, 3rd Floor, Plot 3, Splendor Forum, Jasola District Centre,
New Delhi – 110025, India

103 Penang Road, #05–06/07, Visioncrest Commercial, Singapore 238467

Cambridge University Press is part of the University of Cambridge.

It furthers the University's mission by disseminating knowledge in the pursuit of
education, learning, and research at the highest international levels of excellence.

www.cambridge.org

Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/highereducation/isbn/9781316514641

DOI: [10.1017/9781009085748](https://doi.org/10.1017/9781009085748)

First edition © Rodney Huddleston and Geoffrey K. Pullum 2005

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First edition 2005

19th printing 2020

Second edition 2022

Printed in the United Kingdom by TJ Books Limited, Padstow, Cornwall

A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Names: Huddleston, Rodney D., author. | Pullum, Geoffrey K. author. |

Reynolds, Brett, 1969– author.

Title: A student's introduction to English grammar / Rodney Huddleston,
Geoffrey K. Pullum, Brett Reynolds.

Description: Second edition. | [Cambridge, United Kingdom] ; [New York,
N.Y.] : Cambridge University Press, 2021. | Includes index.

Identifiers: LCCN 2021025054 (print) | LCCN 2021025055 (ebook) |

ISBN 9781316514641 (hardback) | ISBN 9781009088015 (paperback) |

ISBN 9781009085748 (ebook)

Subjects: LCSH: English language–Grammar. | BISAC: LANGUAGE ARTS &
DISCIPLINES / General

Classification: LCC PE1112 .H79 2021 (print) | LCC PE1112 (ebook) |

DDC 428.2–dc22

LC record available at <https://lcn.loc.gov/2021025054>

LC ebook record available at <https://lcn.loc.gov/2021025055>

ISBN 978-1-316-51464-1 Hardback

ISBN 978-1-009-08801-5 Paperback

Additional resources for this publication at www.cambridge.org/SIEG2

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Preface for the Student

In a sense, you already know English grammar. You must, in some unconscious way, if you're reading this. But being able to do something is different from understanding exactly what's being done. Knowing how to walk isn't the same as appreciating the anatomy of the human leg. The study of grammar involves developing an explicit account of how sentences are put together.

This involves investigation. The principles of English grammar are not set down in detail somewhere in some authoritative source, like etiquette rules or legal statutes. They have to be discovered through research, theory formation, and testing. Figuring out how to state the right set of principles and generalizations – even for English, which is almost certainly the most studied language in the world – is a deep and complex academic enterprise in which new results are still emerging.

That's not the impression you would get from the thousands of websites and popular books that claim to give advice on English grammar. They treat English grammar as known doctrine. And, to be frank about it, they repeat useless definitions formulated hundreds of years ago and propose baseless prohibitions and restrictions. Often they're inaccurate or even self-contradictory. This book breaks with a tradition going back centuries and presents a consistent analysis of English grammar that takes account of what's been discovered in modern linguistic research.

Studying English grammar is practically valuable, but it's also intellectually fascinating. It will give you a deeper insight into sentence structure, opening up new approaches to interpreting, appreciating, and using English effectively. That's not to say it will magically improve your writing or public speaking; but it will provide a solid basis for making progress toward that goal.

It will also provide you with some protection from the grammar bullies. Most English speakers have encountered nitpickers who seize upon sentences that they say are 'bad grammar'. Not just unintended slips of the tongue or typing errors; everybody makes those occasionally; they're making mystifying accusations about perfectly ordinary expressions, and calling them grammar errors. The beliefs held by these nitpickers are often grounded in myth rather than fact and refutable just by looking at examples of competent writing or speech. This book aims to help you resist bad advice from ill-informed error-spotters and usage snobs.

It means learning some new concepts and terms. If you're being advised to avoid passives, or get rid of adjectives, or shun split infinitives – familiar but misguided

warnings offered by thousands of writing tutors – you at least need to know what passives and adjectives and infinitives are, and what the facts are about how they are used. Then you can decide whether you want to follow the advice.

Along the way, this book will introduce you to some genuinely unexpected things about the English language. Too often grammar has been treated as a necessary set of dry instructions about fiddly details. That is nothing like what we present in this book. We've found it stimulating and intriguing to work on figuring out how sentence structure works and meaning is expressed. We hope it will be for you.

Preface for the Instructor

This book is designed to provide the basis for a one-semester course on the grammatical structure of the English language. It's aimed at departments of English as well as theoretical or applied linguistics. This new edition has been thoroughly revised throughout, with a view to increasing the accessibility of the book for students. We do draw extensively on discoveries made during the past century of linguistic research on English, but we don't presuppose prior acquaintance with linguistics, let alone a specific theoretical orientation or framework. We explain technical terms as they are introduced, and minimize arcane concepts and notations.

Despite thousands of changes, improvements, and updates, the structure of the book remains essentially the same as in the first edition, with one exception: we have added a new [Chapter 8](#), surveying the types of adjuncts occurring in the structure of clauses. This has the happy consequence that the topics of the chapters now align exactly with the content of *The Cambridge Grammar of the English Language* (Rodney Huddleston and Geoffrey K. Pullum et al., Cambridge University Press, 2002; henceforth *CGEL*), the much larger reference grammar on which this book is based. So for anyone who wants greater detail about any topic in this book, student or instructor, the first course of action is simply to consult the chapter with the same number in *CGEL*.

The book is suitable for use with students of any English-speaking background, and the first edition has been used by many instructors at universities around the world. The authors, between them, have decades of experience teaching this material in Britain, Australia, Canada, and the USA. Although the two great dialect clusters of English – British and Australasian (BrE) and North American (AmE) – do differ syntactically in a few minor ways, the differences are almost always a matter of preferences rather than prohibitions, and they give rise to remarkably few difficulties for exposition. In a few clear cases we briefly discuss AmE/BrE divergence, but it's not a primary focus. The only thing that will look distinctively British to American readers is the spelling, where a dialect-defining binary choice had to be made. But seeing BrE spellings like *centre*, *colour*, and *signalling* (as opposed to AmE *center*, *color*, and *signaling*) shouldn't faze any literate American.

[Chapter 1](#) is a brief introduction to some general issues relating to the linguistic study of English. [Chapter 2](#) introduces some crucial concepts and provides a brief survey of the content of the entire book – a rapid summary of what will be

subsequently covered in more detail, the idea being to introduce much of the terminology and give a sense of where to look for particular phenomena. The detailed content of the book is in the fourteen subsequent chapters. [Chapters 3, 5, 6, and 7](#) deal with the major lexical categories – verbs, nouns, determinatives, adjectives, adverbs, and prepositions – and the structure of the phrases that they head. ([Chapters 3 and 5](#) are unavoidably lengthier than any others, because of the complexity of the verb system and the structure of NPs, and might need to be allotted double the class time spent on other chapters.) [Chapter 4](#) describes the structure of simple, positive, active, declarative, non-coordinate clauses with no special stylistic reordering, which we call ‘canonical clauses’ – a term that we do not take to have theoretical significance, but use solely an expository convenience. (Those acquainted with the American linguistics of the 1950s may correctly see in it an echo of the notion of ‘kernel sentence’.) The idea is to describe canonical clauses first, and then systematically tackle the ways in which other clauses diverge.

[Chapters 9 to 16](#) present a step-by-step introduction to the ways in which clauses may diverge in structure from canonical ones: negation ([Chapter 9](#)), non-declarative clause types ([Chapter 10](#)), subordination ([Chapter 11](#)), relativization ([Chapter 12](#)), comparison ([Chapter 13](#)), non-finiteness ([Chapter 14](#)), coordination ([Chapter 15](#)), and the discourse-sensitive ‘information-packaging’ constructions that for many syntacticians are the most interesting part of English syntax ([Chapter 16](#)). We have relegated word-internal structure (inflectional morphology, the basics of lexical word formation, and the associated spelling rules) to an appendix published online.

This text is not advanced in the sense of needing prerequisite courses, but it is by no means a popularization. It is intended as the basis for a serious and detailed introduction to English grammar for undergraduates and masters-level students. Covering it all would be a substantial diet for a semester, because our coverage is unusually complete: rather than cherry-picking phenomena that highlight points of syntactic interest, we cover virtually the entire range of constructions found in sentences of contemporary English. Some instructors (especially those on ten-week rather than fifteen-week terms) have found it best to omit specific chapters from the course: it is possible to skip such topics as negation ([Chapter 9](#)), comparatives and superlatives ([Chapter 13](#)), or coordination ([Chapter 15](#)) without the gaps causing much trouble. And some adopters have told us they like to reorder things so that the interesting and important material of [Chapter 16](#) on discourse-sensitive syntactic constructions is reached earlier.

The exposition is very deliberately informal in style. Too many scholars have felt obliged to write sentences like ‘One should not imagine, however, that such locutions are unattested’ when they could have said ‘But you shouldn’t think people never say that.’ We’ve tried to lean toward the latter style. Syntax can be hard enough without dense expository prose making it harder. A modern textbook should employ what we call normal style – roughly the kind of conversational

language most instructors would use when explaining something in the classroom. We don't want to encourage one of the most damaging errors made by English teachers in the past: confusing formality with correctness, and consequently condemning features of ordinary conversational Standard English as 'bad grammar'.

We have also reduced the terminological burden a bit in this edition. Unfamiliar terms that did not do a lot of heavy lifting have been removed. For example, we have avoided the use of the term 'catenative' for the chained-together subjectless non-finite clauses seen in *tends to try to seem to avoid being noticed*, though the coverage of important topics like raising in [Chapter 14](#) is basically unchanged.

We have not attempted to cover topics like historical change, sociolinguistic variation, or the structure of non-standard dialects. Semantics is discussed only very informally, and we touch only lightly on anaphora, deixis, and ellipsis (*CGEL*'s Chapter 17); the interpretation of sentences with omitted or reduced parts connects to difficult questions in syntax, semantics, discourse, logic, and pragmatics that we feel are best covered in a second-level course. And we don't cover punctuation (*CGEL*'s Chapter 20), despite its critical importance for literacy, because its fixed and conventional nature – often stipulated in publishers' style sheets – makes it very different from the living and evolving phenomena of syntax that we are primarily concerned with.

A central aim of this text is to clarify the data that any theory of English syntax must be able to describe. In assessing the facts of usage we have regularly had recourse to standard data sources like the British National Corpus (BNC) and the enormously useful corpora made available by Mark Davies through english-corpora.org: the Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA), News On the Web (NOW), the iWeb corpus, and others. But we don't try to illustrate with corpus examples throughout, or provide sources for the attested sentences we do use. The examples would nearly always have had to be adapted anyway, for brevity or to remove puzzling distractors. It could be a very useful exercise for students to test our descriptive generalizations by carrying out their own corpus investigations.

We have included more exercises than the first edition had. We would advise instructors to consider what they want to accomplish with exercises and make selective use of our suggestions. The exercises vary a great deal in depth and complexity. Some are quick and easy, but others are essay or research questions that may take the student many hours to complete, and students should be warned of that. Online multiple-choice exercises and other materials will be made available online using the Avallain e-learning platform. These will be accessible through the Cambridge University Press website at www.cambridge.org/SIEG2 and in some cases can be integrated directly into local learning management systems, permitting limited immediate feedback for students.

We provide a number of Usage Controversy Notes covering points where English speakers disagree with each other about what to call 'correct'. But we decided not to

include end-of-chapter bibliographic notes on sources or further reading in the book itself, given the open-ended nature of that enterprise; instead, we plan to provide such notes in an online document on the Cambridge University Press website at www.cambridge.org/SIEG2.¹

Linguists will see that we reject some assumptions quite widely held in twentieth-century generative linguistics. The differences are sharp and explicit enough that they should provide grounds for discussion without causing confusion. For example, we do not believe subordinators ('complementizers') or coordinators ('conjunctions') are heads, and we treat *every day* as a noun phrase headed by *day* rather than a determinative phrase headed by *every*. For instructors in linguistics departments, our decisions on such points do not by any means preclude the possibility of their theoretical pros and cons being discussed as part of the course. For others, such stands on theoretically controversial points will matter little and may pass unnoticed. The important thing is that we are consistent: the assumptions we adopt are maintained throughout. That does not mean we are legislating a theoretical view: it is always possible to stop and ask whether certain facts about syntax are better explained under one theoretical conception rather than another.

One of the most important points we draw from our linguistics backgrounds, and try to impart to the reader, is that grammatical study is (or ought to be) a matter of discovery rather than legislation or pontification. Too often English grammar has been regarded as a collection of timeless edicts defining what is 'proper', or reduced to a short list of tips and hints for the insecure. This is unfortunate, because the grammars of English published over the last two or three centuries have created a descriptive tradition that we see as gravely flawed. In this book we reject much traditional dogma. Since the late eighteenth century, when Lindley Murray sold a million copies of his grammar textbook (largely plagiarized from Robert Lowth's three decades earlier), students have been told that nouns are words that name things; that pronouns are words that stand in place of nouns to avoid repeating them; that prepositions stand before nouns to relate them to other nouns; that the subject says what the sentence is about; that the object can be defined via the weird phrase 'receiver of the action'; that relative clauses are 'adjective clauses' because they 'describe nouns'; and so on. It is high time serious courses on the structure of English broke away from repeating such time-worn nonsense.

However, when we depart from the tradition, we do so in a strict and consistent way, following *CGEL*. Adopting even a minor change in our analyses can lead via a ripple of consequences to a contradiction. Working out the consequences of such potential revisions could lead to interesting ideas for final-year honours

¹ One other temptation we have resisted is adding subsidiary points in footnotes. Lovers of arcane footnotes, if there are any, will be saddened to discover that this is the only footnote in the book.

dissertations or master's theses that take the study of English syntax further. Nothing would please us more than seeing students working from this book improve on our description through their own research.

Finally, like all authors we have ended up with many debts, more than we can explain in detail. We particularly thank Jim Donaldson for many thoughtful comments; Aileen Bach, Michael DiPetta, and Peter Evans for comments, corrections, and proofreading; John Payne for advice and clarification on many syntactic points; John Joseph for discussion of the concept of Standard English; and Bryan Garner for useful discussion of controversial usage. We have naturally spent less time with our nearest and dearest than we could have done if we were not working on this book, and we thank them for their tolerance (they know who they are). And for obvious reasons, given that we completed this revision in the years 2020 and 2021, we thank everyone in the business of public health and vaccine production.

Abbreviations

CATEGORIES

AdjP	adjective phrase
AdvP	adverb phrase
Clause _{REL}	relative clause
Crd	coordinator
D	determinative
DP	determinative phrase
Intj	interjection
N	noun
N _{PRO}	pronoun
Nom	nominal
NP	noun phrase
P	preposition
PP	preposition phrase
Sbr	subordinator
V	verb
VP	verb phrase

FUNCTIONS

Comp	complement
Det	determiner
ExtMod	external modifier
Mod	modifier
O	object
Obj	object
O ^d	direct object
O ⁱ	indirect object
Pred	predicate
PredComp	predicative complement
S	subject
Subj	subject

OTHER

AmE	American English
BrE	British English
CGEL	<i>The Cambridge Grammar of the English Language</i>

<i>do</i> _{aux}	auxiliary verb <i>do</i>
<i>do</i> _{lex}	lexical verb <i>do</i>
<i>if</i> _c	conditional preposition <i>if</i>
<i>if</i> _i	interrogative subordinator <i>if</i>
sg	singular
<i>too</i> _x	<i>too</i> with the meaning “excessively” rather than “additionally”
<i>we</i> _D	the determinative <i>we</i> as in <i>We voters disagree.</i>
<i>we</i> _P	the pronoun <i>we</i> as in <i>We disagree.</i>
<i>you</i> _D	the determinative <i>you</i> as in <i>You politicians are all alike.</i>
<i>you</i> _P	the pronoun <i>you</i>
§	section

1

Introduction

1.1 The English Language

This book is about how sentences are constructed in English. Almost certainly, English is now the most important language in the world. This might not have been clear even just fifty years ago, but it cannot reasonably be denied today. English is used for government business in well over sixty countries and territories around the world. By international agreement it is the primary language for all air traffic control and maritime navigation. It's the uncontroversial choice of official language for almost all international academic conferences, and increasingly the main language of higher education globally. The European Union is increasingly using it for conducting business even though the United Kingdom is no longer a member.

The widespread use and enormous influence of English is not due to anyone having objectively judged it to be deserving. The unique status of the language is just a side-effect of various mutually reinforcing historical trends. From the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries onward, British exploration, missionary work, imperialism, and colonial policy began to spread English around the world. The whole North American continent ultimately adopted English as its dominant language (despite important early rivals like Spanish, French, and German). India's huge multilingual population recognized English as a subsidiary official language (alongside Hindi) for government business after independence. The twentieth century, especially after the outcomes of the first and second world wars, saw an extraordinary growth in the economic power of the USA and the British Commonwealth.

The growing importance of scientific research further strengthened the standing of English; it emerged as the language in which the majority of scientists publish their results. The economic importance of university education accentuated this effect: many universities in non-English-speaking countries allow or even require PhD dissertations to be submitted in English. And a hugely important additional factor was the global success of English-language broadcasting, publishing, song-writing, and above all film production: in Hollywood, the only place on earth where film-making budgets routinely run into the hundreds of millions of dollars, almost every film script is in English. It may not be a good thing for a single language to come so close to predominating all over the planet, but it seems to be happening.

Yet English may not have been the right language to pick as a global language. In fact a case could be made that it is quite ill-suited to its international role, for a number of linguistic reasons:

- The complex consonant clusters of spoken English are tongue-twisters for many foreign learners. The underlined portion of *Our strengths spring from our unity* can have either five, six, or seven consonantal sounds in a row, depending on how carefully the speaker struggles to pronounce it. (Many languages keep things nice and simple by avoiding adjacent consonant sounds in words.)
- Stress in words of more than one syllable is vital for intelligibility (and interacts in complex ways with rhythm and accent in sentences), but it is extraordinarily difficult for learners to get right: the syllable with heaviest stress is the first one in *cátapult*, the second in *carnívorous*, the third in *atavístic*, the fourth in *impressíonístic*, the fifth in *amniocentésis*, and the sixth in *incomprehensibility*. (In Hungarian things are easy: stress in a word is always on its first syllable.)
- English spelling is notoriously chaotic. Anyone who naively expected *bought*, *cough*, *dough*, *plough*, *rough*, *through*, and *borough* to have similar vowel sounds would be shocked to find that they all sound quite different and the spelling gives no clue. Some sounds in English have more than a dozen different spellings. (A language like Finnish has no such orthographic disorder; basic spelling can be learned in a few minutes.)
- Learners of English need to memorize the forms for about 200 irregular verbs: notice the strikingly different patterns for past tense formation in *bake* / *baked*; *break* / *broke*; *bring* / *brought*; *fall* / *fell*; *feel* / *felt*; *know* / *knew*; *have* / *had*; *make* / *made*; *sing* / *sang*; *take* / *took*; etc. (Swahili verbs, by contrast, have hardly any irregularity except in the verb meaning “be” in its present tense.)
- And the syntactic complexities of English – its intricate auxiliary verb system, varied patterns of verb/preposition pairings, profusion of distinct main and subordinate clause structures, and detailed principles of word order – will occupy the majority of this book.

Of course, other languages have their tricky bits too. English is not uniquely complicated. Nor is it any more logical, clear, regular, expressive, easily learnable, or otherwise perfect than any other language. The invented language Esperanto was specifically designed to be regular in structure and easy to learn, but despite being promoted by enthusiasts for more than a hundred years, no country has adopted it for official purposes, and the world has continued to gravitate toward English. Any other human language could in principle have served the same purposes, but none did. Today, given the extraordinary importance that has accidentally attached to English, with billions of people around the world using it every day, it is reasonable for any user to want not only a good grasp of its vocabulary but also a clear idea of its grammar. Providing it is the goal of this book.

1.1.1 Standard English

A language as widely distributed as English, socially and geographically, will exhibit a lot of social and regional variation. Linguists refer to varieties within a language as **dialects**. But the difference between being a dialect of some language and being a separate language is not clear-cut; to some extent it's tangled up with politics and identity. What's important is that linguists don't use the term 'dialect' just for rural, provincial, or uneducated varieties: they regard *EVERYONE* as speaking a dialect. The term 'English' actually covers a huge array of dialects, and this book is concerned with describing just one particularly tight-knit cluster of dialects usually referred to as **Standard English**.

There is no brief definition of Standard English; in a sense the whole of this book is a contribution to defining it. And the word 'standard' isn't supposed to imply that it has been approved by some committee, or that it's a model for everyone to aspire to or judge themselves by or fall short of. It's just a name for which we haven't got a good alternative. (People also talk about Standard Arabic or Standard Italian.)

One thing that could be said about the Standard English dialect cluster is that it has the property of being – in most contexts anyway – the variety of English least likely to draw attention to itself. It isn't from anywhere in particular. It's the variety of the language that most learners in English classes around the world aspire to learn, and the one in which English-language books, magazines, and newspapers are almost exclusively written. Broadly speaking, it is the kind of English least likely to be judged odd or inappropriate for any kind of public use, or to draw attention to the speaker's biography. In short, Standard English tends to convey less about a person speaking it than many other dialects do.

The word 'standard' does have the unfortunate property of suggesting some standard or level that has to be met, so that non-standard dialects are sub-standard. They are not, so resist that suggestion. Standard English owes its clout to historical accidents; things could have turned out differently. In saying that, we're not denying that it is used by the rich and powerful in the anglophone world: of course it is. But it's also used by millions of the poor and powerless. We're also not ignoring the existence of dialect prejudice: it is rampant, and millions of people suffer from being unfairly disrespected or ignored simply because of the dialect of English that they speak. We know that, and we deplore it. But the sociological facts of class bigotry and racial or national prejudice don't alter the facts of how sentences are structured in Standard English,

Misunderstandings about what 'Standard English' means will persist, we are sure of that. But keep in mind that on the occasions when we draw attention to features of non-standard dialects of English (as in 1.1.4 below), we are *NEVER* suggesting those dialects are sub-standard.

English dialects differ from each other most of all in **lexicon** (what words are in current use in typical speakers' vocabularies) and **phonology** (the system of pronunciation), and on these topics, this book says very little. Dialects differ much less in the structure of sentences, clauses, phrases, and words; and that will be our focus.

The grammatical variation within Standard English is trivial, but it tends to get a lot of attention from purists, trolls, snobs, critics, and bullies. They tend to obsess over a small set of well-known controversial points: how to use *hopefully*, where to use *whom*, choosing between *which* and *that*, saying *taller than me* or *taller than I*, and so on. These points of detail offer opportunities for alleging that someone has made a grammar error – and to imply on that basis that they're illiterate or stupid. Exaggerated emotions are provoked; angry letters to conservative newspapers are written. This sometimes makes it seem as if grammar is an area of major controversy. Yet it isn't. The largely unnoticed fact is that for the vast majority of questions about what's grammatically correct in Standard English, the answers are remarkably clear, as shown by huge masses of evidence. That widespread homogeneity is what makes a book like this possible.

1.1.2 Written and Spoken English

Human languages existed first in live-communication forms like speaking or hand-signing. Some languages, later in their history, came to be written down as well. The present writing system for English evolved slowly over nearly two millennia, and as we said in the [previous section](#), it's illogical and irregular. But that's about the fit between spelling and sound. When we come to sentence structure, to a large extent the aspects of English we need to focus on tend to hold for both spoken and written English.

Sometimes we'll need to mention aspects of the language that are specific to speech (like intonation and stress) or limited to writing (like punctuation), but mostly we will be concentrating on grammatical facts that don't vary much between English as uttered orally and English as written or printed. The primacy of speech always tempts linguists to refer to 'the speaker' when talking about the person producing an utterance, but every time we say 'speakers' we intend to cover all users – writers as well as conversationalists.

1.1.3 British and American Subvarieties

Some minor points of grammatical difference can be found between two major subclusters within Standard English: the British, Australasian, and South African dialects which we will call **BrE**, and the Canadian and American dialects we will refer to as **AmE**.

One noteworthy example is that BrE users often say or write sentences like *I don't know if she's seen it yet, but she may have done*. That *done* on the end (we underline it

to draw attention to it) sounds quite odd to AmE speakers; they would say *I don't know if she's seen it yet, but she may have*.

Another such case is that singular nouns referring to groups of people with a common purpose, like companies or governments or teams, are treated as plural by most BrE speakers for purposes of verb agreement: in BrE a headline saying *England are collapsing* would probably be about a losing performance by the England cricket team, whereas *England is collapsing* would suggest an unprecedented geophysical catastrophe. AmE speakers tend to regard the first sentence as ungrammatical.

But most of the grammar differences between AmE and BrE are preferences rather than sharp distinctions. An AmE user will typically say *I did that already* where a BrE speaker would prefer *I've done that already*, though both versions would be understood by both communities of speakers. For the most part, it is hard to tell from grammatical features of a passage of written Standard English which side of the Atlantic it came from.

The most obvious sign of the difference is not in the syntax but in the well-known conventional spelling differences, which began to solidify when dictionaries were published by Samuel Johnson in England (1755) and Noah Webster in the USA (1828): a single occurrence of a spelling like *honor* tells you that you're reading AmE (because BrE would have *honour*). This book uses BrE spelling, but all literate users of English should be (and usually are) familiar with AmE spelling as well.

1.1.4 Other Dialects

There is dialect variation within Standard English: there are forms used by some speakers but not all. We indicate those, when it's relevant to the matter at hand, with a raised per cent sign (⁰⁰). It'll mean that probably not everyone in a class of English speakers will agree on whether the sentence is grammatical.

One factor giving rise to dialect differences of this sort is that younger speakers don't always speak in exactly the same way as older speakers. In the BrE detective novels by P. D. James (born in 1920), characters say things like ⁰⁰*I hadn't a car back then* (where younger speakers would say *I hadn't got a car* or *I didn't have a car*), or ⁰⁰*If he had left I should have heard him* (the contemporary equivalent is *I would have heard him*), or ⁰⁰*Marcus was eleven years younger than I* (most contemporary speakers would say *younger than me*). The syntax of English changes only very slowly, but over a century the changes are perceptible. Baroness James's prose is not twenty-first century BrE. And AmE readers must occasionally find some of her expressions quite puzzling; even such simple phrases as *I was visiting my husband in hospital* are different (AmE speakers would always say *in the hospital*, without implying any prior mention of a specific hospital).

These minor dialect differences fall within the broad definition of Standard English, but in addition (as mentioned in 1.1.1) many non-standard dialects co-exist with Standard English, mostly in spoken form but also in dialogue passages written

by novelists. Standard English speakers in any moderately diverse community encounter these non-standard dialects every day in plays, films, songs, and conversations, so it is important not to be entirely ignorant of them. In the [b] cases of [1] the raised exclamation mark (!) signals not that they are errors, but that they are correct form in several non-standard dialects; Standard English equivalents are given in [a].

[1]	STANDARD ENGLISH DIALECT	NON-STANDARD ENGLISH DIALECTS
i	a. <i>It doesn't matter what they did.</i>	b. <i>!It don't matter what they done.</i>
ii	a. <i>I have never broken anything.</i>	b. <i>!I ain't never broke nothin'.</i>

- *Don't* as in [ib] is found in some non-standard dialects where Standard English would have *doesn't*, and *done* is found corresponding to Standard English *did*. The verb forms aren't accidental mistaken choices; it's just that not all dialects have the same verb morphology as Standard English.
- The word *ain't* in [iib] – an auxiliary verb form that famously signals a non-standard dialect – makes the clause negative, but the negation is also marked by *never*, and again by *nothin'*. People often call this 'double negation' (though if you count, you'll see that there are three marks of negation). What's actually going on is multiple marking of a single negation. This is normal in many languages, including Italian, Polish, and Russian. Standard English as in [iia] happens to lack this multiple-marking feature – though Standard English speakers know perfectly well how to interpret it when they hear it from a non-standard dialect speaker.

Features of the sort seen in the [b] examples of [1] would stand out as very surprising in a typical TV news broadcast or newspaper editorial – angry letters would flood in – because they are uncontroversially agreed to be non-standard. But people who naturally use the [b] sentences of [1] in conversation are not trying to utter the [a] versions. They said what they intended. And their speech is not deficient or illogical; they're using a dialect that has a different negation syntax from the Standard English one.

True errors in speech or writing are quite a different matter. When a newsreader misreads a word or a writer makes a typing error, it's a matter of intending one thing but accidentally producing another. That happens now and then to everybody, but it's sporadic and unpredictable – and even the person who made the error will usually agree, if it's pointed out, that it happened.

When our focus is entirely on Standard English, as it is throughout nearly all of the book, we'll use a prefixed asterisk to indicate sequences that are **ungrammatical**, in the sense of not conforming to the grammatical rules of the Standard English dialect as far as we can determine. So we might contrast *The dog ran away* (grammatical) with **Ran away the dog* (ungrammatical).

1.1.5 Formal and Informal Style

The distinction between standard and non-standard dialects of English is very different from the important distinction between different style levels within Standard English. What we mean by ‘style’ here is not literary style but just level of formality (sociolinguists often call it ‘register’). There are many levels imaginable between (say) prepared text to be delivered as a speech on a very solemn occasion and casual email to a friend; we illustrate in [2]:

- | | | |
|-----|--|--|
| [2] | LESS FORMAL (NORMAL) | MORE FORMAL |
| i | a. <i>I'm the one she can rely on.</i> | b. <i>I am the one on whom she may rely.</i> |
| ii | a. <i>Who's it addressed to?</i> | b. <i>To whom is it addressed?</i> |

There's no call for the exclamation mark notation or the percent sign here. Standard English allows for plenty of variation in style depending on the context in which the language is being used. The [b] versions would generally be used only in very formal contexts indeed; in ordinary conversation they would seem pompous or just weird: uttering the [b] variants would be like putting on a bow tie and a top hat to take your dog for a walk. In most contexts, the [a] version would be overwhelmingly preferred. We will sometimes call the [a] versions **normal** rather than informal style. They're much more common; and though they're more relaxed, that doesn't mean they're inferior to the very formal [b] counterparts.

The distinction here isn't restricted to speech. Newspapers and magazines generally use a mixture of styles: a little less formal for some topics, a little more formal for others. We've chosen to use normal rather than formal style in this book, writing *something you'd be happy with* rather than *something with which one would be content*.

1.2 Describing and Advising

A book on English grammar can have either of two very different goals: the aim can be either to **describe**, which means trying to characterize the grammatical system, or to **advise**, which means trying to influence the way in which you use it.

There must be a grammatical system of some kind: when speakers of the language compose sentences, they're doing something that non-speakers can't do. The aim of a description is to give an accurate account of the principles of sentence construction that guide them. Advising, on the other hand, is a matter of telling people how they ought to speak or write. That can be a respectable aim – helping them to improve their use of the language, on the assumption that their command of it might not be perfect and might need improvement.

There's nothing wrong with either goal, but this book definitely has description as its goal, not advice. We try to describe the principles defining Standard English, and mostly don't mean to imply anything about what sort of sentences you should use.

How exactly you want to speak or write will depend on many things we cannot know. You might be writing screenplay dialogue, or preparing a script for a solemn public declaration, or writing a friendly letter to someone you know well, or drafting a deliberately humorous editorial, or trying to craft something that will make the reader think it's from a foreigner. Sensible advice would have to be highly specific to a context that we couldn't possibly know about. Lots of how-to-write books seem to have already decided what you're going to be writing and what style you ought to adopt. We haven't made any such assumptions.

The two approaches – description and advice – wouldn't need to be in conflict if everyone agreed on the facts, and those facts were invariant across time and space. Descriptive grammar books would explain what the language is like, and advisory ones would tell you how to adhere to the description and avoid mistakes – and a mistake would be any failure to accord with the descriptive account. But the actual picture is complicated by the tendency of usage guides not to be based on accurate description, but instead to have a strongly reformist intent.

Some books on how to write, in short, don't seem to be interested in encouraging you to write the way expert current users do; instead, they urge you to avoid putting things in ways they disapprove of. They want you to write in ways that are now quite old-fashioned. They dismiss the practices of other writers as 'ignorant' or 'barbarous' and recommend usage that hardly any normal people follow.

There are exceptions: some books on usage are very good, basing their advice on carefully gathered evidence about what Standard English speakers actually say. But others are amazingly bad, peddling ridiculous myths about Standard English rather than useful advice, and often confusing informal style with grammatical error.

Although we hardly ever issue any advice about how you should speak or write, we do provide boxes headed 'Usage Controversy Note'. These contain warnings or discussion about parts of the language where there is a dispute about what to treat as normal or correct. We warn you of a dispute and explain what usage manuals have said about it, and if they've gone wrong we point out where and how.

1.2.1 Technical Terms for Grammatical Description

Describing complex systems of any kind – car engines, legal statutes, musical scores, computer systems, human languages – calls for theoretical concepts and technical terms, like 'gasket', 'tort', 'crescendo', 'algorithm', or 'adverb'. It's unavoidable. We'll need to introduce and define many technical terms for grammatical concepts in this book.

What we mean by calling a word a technical term is simply that it's associated with a special meaning needed within a certain discipline. You can't guess the meaning of a technical term on the basis of how you've seen the word used before. For example, you may have already encountered the word 'imperative' in sentences

like *Rebuilding is our first imperative* (where it means “essential task”) or *Diversification is imperative* (where it means “vitaly necessary”); but seeing sentences like these gives you no clue as to the meaning of the word in the context of English grammar, where **imperative** identifies a certain type of clause which has a plain-form verb, often lacks a subject, and usually expresses a directive (see §10.4).

We’ll generally give the explanation of a term just before we first use it, or sometimes immediately following that first use. There is no perfect order of introduction: the vocabulary of grammar can’t all be explained at once, or in a perfectly logical order, because the meanings of grammatical terms are very tightly connected to each other: sometimes neither member of a pair of terms can be properly understood independently of the other one.

We’ll use standard terms for three different areas within the linguistic study of form and meaning:

- **Morphology** deals with the internal form of words: *unopened* is a grammatically permitted combination of *un*, *open*, and *ed*: it complies with the morphological principles of English, whereas **openedun* does not.
- **Syntax** deals with the principles governing how words can be assembled into grammatically well-formed sentences: *I found an unopened bottle of wine* is grammatical but **I found a bottle unopened of wine* is not (*unopened* is in a position where the syntactic principles of English don’t allow it).
- **Semantics** deals with the principles by which sentences are associated with their meanings. For example, it is a semantic fact that to say *I found an unopened bottle of wine* is to commit yourself to the claim that at a time in the past you came upon a wine bottle that had its original contents sealed inside.

We’ll need technical terms in all three of these areas. And even fairly well-known terms (noun, verb, pronoun, subject, object, tense) will be defined here in ways you may not be familiar with, because the grammars of the past got a lot of things wrong. We won’t assume any prior understanding of such terms, and we caution you in advance that we will depart from many mistaken definitions of the past. We’ll devote just as much attention to familiar terms found in earlier grammars as we do to the occasional novel terms of our own.

Even a term as familiar as ‘past tense’ illustrates this point. Tense is a dimension on which verbs can differ in their form: *start* and *started* differ in tense, and *started* is the past tense form. For *say*, the past tense is *said*, and for *offend* the past tense is *offended*. The usual definition of ‘past tense’ found in grammar books and dictionaries says simply that past tense forms express or indicate a time in the past. But past tense verb forms DON’T always make reference to past time, and references to past time don’t always use past tense forms. The following examples show this (the verbs we’re interested in are underlined):

[3]	STANDARD DEFINITION WORKS	STANDARD DEFINITION FAILS
i	a. <i>The course <u>started</u> last week.</i>	b. <i>I thought the course <u>started</u> next week.</i>
ii	a. <i>If he <u>said</u> that, he was wrong.</i>	b. <i>If he <u>said</u> that, she would leave him.</i>
iii	a. <i>I <u>offended</u> my many fans.</i>	b. <i>I deeply regret <u>offending</u> my many fans.</i>

The usual definition works for the [a] examples, but not for the [b] ones.

- In [i], the past tense *started* in the [a] case locates the start of the course in past time, but in [b] the same past tense form indicates an assumed starting time in the future. So not every past tense involves a past time reference.
- The pair in [ii] contrasts past time in [a] (which is conditional on whether he actually said something in the past) with future time in [b] (about what would follow from his saying it in a conjectured future utterance; §3.4.2 covers this use of the past tense with *if*). Again, there's a past tense, but no reference to past time.
- Finally, in [iii], the event of my offending my fans is located in past time in both cases, but whereas in [a] *offended* is a past tense form, in [b] *offending* is not. So not every past time reference involves a past tense.

The usual definition yields wrong answers for all the [b] examples: it would imply that *started* and *said* aren't past tense forms, but that *offending* is. Yet these aren't weird cases we concocted: they're perfectly ordinary. Sentences like them occur all the time. What's wrong is the traditional definition.

Why has the definition of 'past tense' as a form of the verb expressing past time been repeated in so many books, when it's clearly wrong? Perhaps because traditional grammars have tried to give a definition that would apply at least approximately in almost any language. However, if we need to reliably identify the English verbs that are in the past tense form, that won't do; the correlation between form and meaning isn't rigid or one-to-one. (This is all covered in greater detail in [Chapter 3](#).)

What you can say is that reference to past time is the PRIMARY OR MOST CHARACTERISTIC USE of past tense forms in English. That might come closer to applying to other languages as well. But we can't determine whether some arbitrary word in English is a past tense verb form by simply asking whether it describes something happening in past time.

The definitions found in textbooks and dictionaries are often of very limited value in helping to identify items or kinds of expression within English. It's not that the ordinary meanings of words like 'past' are totally irrelevant: there are reasons why that term was adopted. But an account of verbs in English must specify the grammatical properties – the morphology and syntax, not just the semantics – that enable us to determine whether or not a specific expression should count as a past tense. Something similar holds for all the other grammatical terms we'll be using.

1.3 The Structure of Sentences

Non-linguists generally talk about language as if it's all about words. People say *Don't believe a word of it*, as if you could believe words; they say *Give me your word*, as if a single word could express a promise; they say *She has a way with words*, as if picking the right words was all it took to make a persuasive argument; they say *Thank you for your kind words* after being praised, as if it were the words that counted. But it's hardly ever mere words that people are talking about. It's **sentences**, not words, that can express beliefs, make promises, frame convincing arguments, or constitute praise. And it is a vital fact about sentences that they are not just collections of words, nor sequences of words. There is more to sentences than that. Sentences have **structure** that is governed by the principles of syntax.

Sentences are the largest units that have syntactic structure. Paragraphs, chapters, and entire novels have structure too. But their structure is not of the sort that syntax defines. The structure of a novel is responsive to issues of plot and presentational strategy, not mere syntax. What to introduce first and what to leave till later in a story is entirely up to the author or storyteller; they're not under grammatical constraint. But English syntax dictates that you can't express *Pass me that hammer* with the word *me* shifted to the end: **Pass that hammer me* is just not grammatical (though *Pass that hammer to me* is).

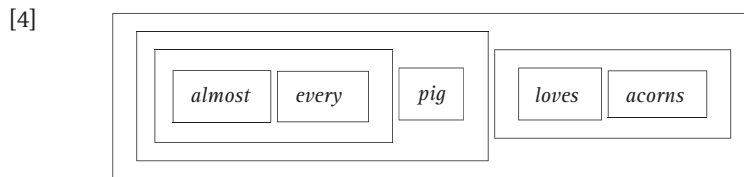
Most of what we discuss in this book will in fact concern smaller units than sentences: for the most part we'll be examining the structure of **clauses**, which can be roughly characterized as the smallest units that can really say something – describe a situation (*Nobody cares*), express a claim (*Kim did it*), pose a question (*Are you crazy?*), or convey an instruction (*Go home*). Sentences generally consist either of a single clause or of a sequence of clauses linked by words like *and*. We'll also be paying close attention to the structure of **phrases**, which are sequences of crucially connected words in which one word is central (*the key to this door*).

Three crucial assumptions about the structure of sentences, clauses, and phrases will help in understanding how we can describe them and how we can give diagrams of their structure. The first point is that sentences are composed of parts which we will call **constituents**, some of them being words and others being larger than words (a constituent can contain other constituents). The second is that the parts are classified into types, which we will call **categories**. And the third – very often confused with the second in traditional grammars – is that constituents of particular categories can have **functions** or grammatical roles within the larger constituents that contain them. All three of these crucial ideas need further discussion.

1.3.1 Constituents

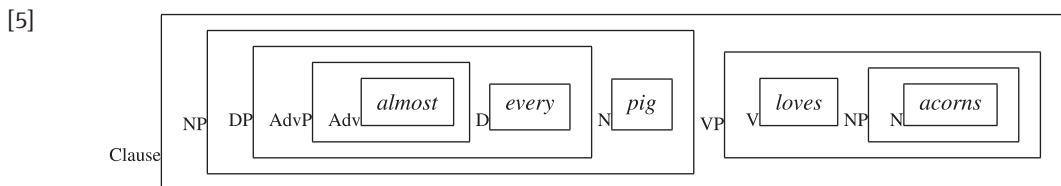
Evidence interwoven throughout the rest of this book suggests that a sentence like *Almost every pig loves acorns* has two major syntactic parts: *almost every pig* is the first, and *loves acorns* is the second. *Almost every pig* also has two main parts: *almost every* is the first and *pig* is the second. So in addition to the five words in the sentence, which are its smallest units, it also has *almost every* and *almost every pig* and *loves acorns* among its constituents.

This fact – that there are parts containing parts, and so on – could be represented by putting the parts into boxes, and their subparts into boxes within boxes, like this:



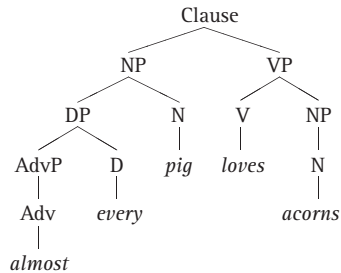
1.3.2 Categories

The second point is that these constituents are of different types: they are classified into **categories**. In the terms that we will outline in [Chapter 2](#) and explain much more fully in the subsequent chapters, we'll say that *wall* and *city* are **nouns** (N), or more specifically, count nouns; *a* and *the* are **determinatives** (D), more specifically of the type known as **articles**; *a wall* and *the city* are **noun phrases** (NPs); *protected* is a **verb** (V), in a past tense form known as the **preterite**; *protected the city* is a **verb phrase** (VP); and the whole thing is a **clause**. We could try to represent some of these aspects of structure by giving the boxes labels, like this:



But this begins to look a bit cluttered and hard to read. It is clearer and cleaner to use what computer scientists call **trees**. These have become the standard way of representing sentence structures in modern works on syntax. We put the label of the whole thing at the top, draw downward-diverging lines to the labels of the next-largest boxes, and so on down to their contents. A tree for our example, corresponding exactly to [\[5\]](#), is shown in [\[6\]](#).

[6]



(We'll explain later why we show *almost* not just as an adverb – labelled Adv – but as an adverb phrase – AdvP – containing only one word, and why *acorns* is not just shown as a noun but as a one-word NP.)

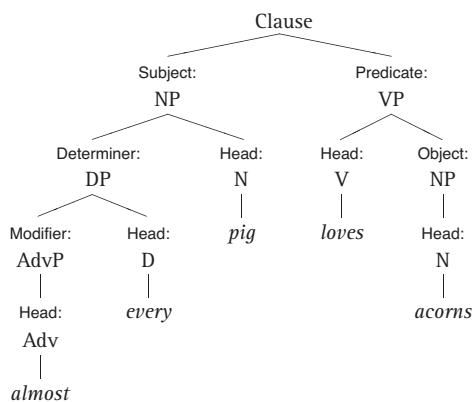
1.3.3 Functions

The third component of the description we will give for every sentence involves saying for each constituent not only what category it belongs to but also what function it has in the constituent that contains it. In our example, *almost every pig* is the **subject** of the clause; the noun *pig* is the **head** of that NP; the VP is the **predicate** of the clause; the verb *loves* is the **head** of the predicate (that is, of the VP *loves acorns*); the NP *acorns* is a **direct object** in that VP, required by the head verb *loves*; and so on. To include details of the grammatical functions, we will put the function name followed by a colon above each label, so the label of an NP functioning as the subject of a clause will look like this:

Subj:
NP

For our example, a suitable tree with function information included is shown in [7].

[7]



It should be obvious that the information summarized by the grammar is highly relevant to the way in which sentences convey meaning. While *pig* just refers to a type of animal, *every pig* makes reference to the entire species. *Almost* tampers with that, modifying the meaning of *every* so as to pick out nearly all pigs rather than all of them. *Loves acorns* names a property that some animals have and others don't. The sentence diagrammed in [7] attributes the *loves acorns* property to the members of a collection of animals that includes nearly all pigs, and the way the whole sentence is structured is crucial to that: it is THE WAY THE CONSTITUENTS ARE PUT TOGETHER, not just the words that are chosen, that allows this clause to have its specific meaning.

The task of a complete grammar is to make available, for each sentence of the language, an account of what the constituents are, and what category each constituent belongs to, and what the function is of each one in that sentence, right down to the individual words. Specifying the right categories for the words is the task of the dictionary for the language, so the design of a dictionary is intimately bound up with the task of the grammar. There is then more to be done to give a full description of the language: the phonological generalizations relevant to the pronunciation of each sentence, and all the semantic details defining the meanings of their parts, must also be specified. It is a huge project, even for very well-known languages.

1.4 Investigation and Disconfirmation

We've said that *Almost every pig loves acorns* has two major parts, an NP and a VP. It's an important point that we expect EVIDENCE to be relevant to such claims. We are not simply laying down (or repeating from earlier authorities) rules that you are supposed to follow. We are trying to identify the principles that correctly represent the way people use English – the way they construct sentences when they speak or write and the way they understand sentences in speech or writing and grasp their meaning.

When we say there is evidence that a sentence has two major constituents – an NP and a VP (a subject and a predicate) – we mean that other facts about the language tie in with this claim and support it as a general characterization. Suppose we consider a very simple clause like *This wall protected the city*. We can support the claim that it has two major constituents (the NP *this wall* and the VP *protected the city*) by an experiment where we add an adverb like *obviously* at various points in the sentence and see whether the result is grammatical. What we find is that the adverb is allowed only at certain points:

- [8] i *Obviously this wall protected the city.*
 ii **This obviously wall protected the city.*
 iii *This wall obviously protected the city.*
 iv **This wall protected obviously the city.*
 v **This wall protected the obviously city.*
 vi *This wall protected the city, obviously.*

And under the assumption we have made, we can account for this very neatly: adverbs of this sort (it is functioning as a modal adjunct: see §8.9) can't be positioned inside major constituents of the clause, but only before or between or after them. So *obviously* can fit before the first constituent as in [i]; between the two biggest constituents as in [iii]; or at the end as in [vi].

Since we're assuming that we're investigating a real system, one that actually exists and is in use by everyone who knows English, there is always the possibility that WE COULD BE WRONG ABOUT IT. We could have missed some evidence showing that some principle is not the one English users follow, or that there is a better way to formulate the principle we're talking about.

This point about evidence and investigation is worth illustrating with a small case study. Let's look at a fairly minor point of detail, touched on only very briefly later in the book (§5.8.2): how English speakers use pronouns to refer to ships. In this sentence from the *Encyclopedia Britannica* article about RMS Titanic we underline the pronoun that interests us:

- [9] *On April 10, 1912, the Titanic set sail on its maiden voyage.*

The sentence uses *its maiden voyage* to mean “the Titanic's maiden voyage”. So we have evidence that when using a pronoun rather than a full name to refer to a single ship, people use the appropriate form of the pronoun *it* (*it*, *its*, or *itself*). And when referring to more than one, writers employ *they*; we know that because the same article happens to mention two other earlier contemporaries of the Titanic, the Lusitania and the Mauretania, and says:

- [10] *The two passenger liners were garnering much attention for their expected speed.*

The fact that you can't use *they* for a single ship is very clear from the fact that sentences like [11] never seem to occur:

- [11] **On April 10, 1912, the Titanic set sail on their maiden voyage.*

Any English speaker you ask will tell you that [11] sounds completely wrong. It's also clear that *it* is never used for more than one ship; [12] also sounds like a mistake to speakers of English:

- [12] **The two passenger liners were garnering much attention for its expected speed.*

So our initial generalization can be put like this:

- [13] *It* is the pronoun used for referring to a single ship, and *they* is the one used for referring to more than one ship.

But now some further evidence comes in. This sentence appears in the Wikipedia entry about the ship (as retrieved in early 2021):

- [14] *RMS Titanic was the largest ship afloat at the time she entered service.*

Here the pronoun *she* has been used to refer to the ship, so the generalization in [13] is incomplete. What do we do now? Should we try to decide which of the two is ‘correct’? Does either [9] or [14] have to be condemned as wrong? That would not be our assumption. Both articles seem to be written in perfectly respectable Standard English, and they agree with vast quantities of English prose found elsewhere. The rational assumption is that there are two different options within Standard English, and we need to revise our generalization.

But what’s the new version? Do you get a free choice of pronouns between *he*, *she*, and *it*? Could you just as well use *he*? Well, it doesn’t look like it. Nobody writes anything like [15]:

- [15] **RMS Titanic was the largest ship afloat at the time he entered service.*

We mark this as ungrammatical on the assumption that the underlined *he* is supposed to refer to the underlined ship name. (Naturally it would be fine if *he* referred to the entry into service of some previously mentioned sailor, and not to the ship.) The right generalization seems to be [16]:

- [16] For a single ship, you have a free choice between *it* (*it* or *its* or *itself* as appropriate) and *she* (or *her*, *hers*, or *herself*). For more than one ship, you have to use *they* (or *them* or *their* or *theirs*).

Does that settle it? You might assume so. You could read and write English for years without running into evidence that it was inaccurate. But remember, all such generalizations are just hypotheses. Any one of them could prove to be mistaken. We’re not just trying to lay down simple rules to follow – that would be too easy. Our aim is to work out what the ACTUAL rules are – the tacitly followed principles that competent speakers of English really are using, whether they could say so or not.

In this case there is evidence that the tentative generalization in [16] is inadequate. The evidence comes from sentences with *itself* or *herself*. We can use these in a sentence about a ship righting itself (ceasing to list, or lean to one side). We predict that these examples should be correct:

- [17] i *The ship was listing for a while, but eventually it righted itself.*
 ii *The ship was listing for a while, but eventually she righted herself.*

So far so good: both of those seem fine. But we've picked the two examples that will occur to most people precisely because they sound natural. Our task, which is much less intuitive, is to test the hypothesis by seeing whether we have accounted for all the possibilities, whether they sound natural or not. In this case, we have two other cases to consider:

- [18] i **The ship was listing for a while, but eventually it righted herself.*
- ii **The ship was listing for a while, but eventually she righted itself.*

These definitely don't seem right: nobody mixes *it* and *she* like this within a clause. And we haven't ruled these out. So do we perhaps have to say that there are *it*-style users and *she*-style users, but any given piece of writing has to stick with one or the other? No, it turns out that isn't quite right either. Later on in the Wikipedia article we find this:

- [19] *Although Titanic had advanced safety features, such as watertight compartments and remotely activated watertight doors, it only carried enough lifeboats for 1,178 people.*

This shows us that the Wikipedia article sometimes uses *she* and sometimes uses *it*. Yet **It righted herself* and **She righted itself* still seem wrong and are never encountered. How can we describe what's going on?

In [20] we give a third generalization that comes a lot closer to being fully correct and complete:

- [20] For a single ship, you have a free choice between *it* and *she*, but within any single sentence you have to stick with a consistent choice. For more than one ship, there is no choice and you have to use *they*.

That can stand for now as our best hypothesis about the principle English users follow. But the point we are making is not that we have now arrived at the truth, or that you have to obey [20]. What we are illustrating here is that in order to do grammar you have to INVESTIGATE. Judgements about the rules of English grammar have to be based on evidence, and any given judgement could be mistaken.

At every point in this book we are offering our best attempt at a clear, simple, and accurate statement of the rules English speakers actually follow. But we could always be wrong. You could spot a piece of evidence that shows something we said is false. We would expect that to happen sometimes. And if your evidence is genuinely relevant – if it's not simply based on a stray typographical error or an irrelevant similarity that relates to a different type of sentence, but really represents what we find when Standard English users speak and write – then maybe a better description than ours could be constructed.

English grammar as we conceive of it is not a body of doctrine handed down from some infallible authority. The enterprise of figuring out what the grammar of English should say is a matter of live empirical investigation. Some areas are drastically under-explored and little understood. One example is the topic of the parenthetical interpolations and interruptions that we call **supplements** (see §8.11); another is coordination (see Chapter 15). You can participate in the investigation. We hope we have mostly done our work well, but we aren't necessarily always right. Keep a critical eye on our generalizations. Some of them can probably be revised and improved.

Exercises on Chapter 1

Note: When you complete an exercise, it's very important to check your answers. Those with errors should be marked and reattempted at a later time. Mastering the exercises will typically lead to better learning than simply re-reading the chapter. Further multiple-choice exercises are accessible through the Cambridge University Press website at www.cambridge.org/SIEG2.

We also include a number of supplementary research and challenge exercises, which will extend and deepen your learning.

1. Consider the words *the*, *dog*, *ran*, and *away*. Which are the three grammatical orders of those words? Discuss any possible grounds for doubt or disagreement that you see.
2. Consider what features of the following sentences mark them as belonging to formal style in Standard English. Rewrite them in a more informal style, keeping the meaning as close as possible to the original. Add notes on what you changed and why.
 - i *To whom am I speaking?*
 - ii *It would be a pity if he were to give up now.*
 - iii *We hid the documents, lest they be confiscated.*
 - iv *That which but twenty years ago was a mystery now seems routine.*
 - v *One should always try to do one's best.*
3. For each of the following statements, say whether it is a **morphological**, **syntactic**, or **semantic** fact about English (see §1.2.1).
 - i A completed grammatical sentence of Standard English that begins '*I believe that we ...*' must continue in a way that includes at least one verb.
 - ii A witness who used to be a smoker would be wrong to answer *No* to the question *Did you ever smoke?*
 - iii *Of* can occur as the last word in a Standard English sentence.
 - iv The string of words **He it saw* can be made grammatical by positioning the word *it* after the word *saw*.

- v The verb *enable* is formed from *able* by adding the *en-* prefix.
 - vi We find *fell* rather than **falled*, because *fall* doesn't take the *-ed* suffix.
 - vii When someone says *I was going to walk but I decided not to*, the sense is exactly the same as if they had said *I was going to walk but I decided not to walk*.
 - viii Wherever we can truthfully say *Montmorency bought a red Porsche*, we can also say *Montmorency bought a Porsche*, but not conversely.
 - ix You can't insert *every* at random points in the sentence *A man's got to do what a man's got to do* and get a grammatical result every time.
 - x You can't sincerely say *I believe Sally slapped the boss* if you think that *The boss was slapped by Sally* is a lie.
4. You may have heard people talk about a noun functioning as an adjective or a verb functioning as a noun. Under the framework we've described here, what's wrong with such a description? (See §§1.3.2 and 1.3.3.)
 5. Consider the sentence *Jupiter and Saturn are planets*. Here, the subject is *Jupiter and Saturn*. Based on this, we form the following hypothesis: When the subject has two constituents joined by *and*, if the choice is between *are* and *is*, *are* is always correct. To check that this is true, should you search for examples with the form 'NP *and* NP *are*', or for examples with the form 'NP *and* NP *is*'? Explain why.
 6. List three or four grammar 'rules' you recall hearing about (e.g., Don't start a sentence with *and*). For each rule, say whether you believe that violating that rule would (a) result in an ungrammatical sentence, (b) produce a grammatical sentence in a non-standard dialect but not in Standard English, (c) produce a markedly informal Standard English sentence, or (d) produce Standard English that some people don't like for no obvious reason.
 7. [Supplementary exercise] Choose one or two language references (of any language; grammars, style books, usage guides, or dictionaries) from those accessible to you. Say whether you think they are focused on describing the language or advising the language user, and explain why.
 8. [Supplementary exercise] We have explained that Standard English is 'just a name', but it still offends some people (because of the association between 'not standard' and 'substandard'). You will see throughout this book that we believe finding the right term for a concept is important. Can you think of an alternative name for Standard English that would be better? Explain the pros and cons of one or two candidate terms.

2

Overview of the Book

This short chapter aims to provide a few of the tools needed for grammatical description, to introduce some key concepts and technical terms employed in subsequent chapters, and to give a sense of how the rest of the book is organized.

We start by drawing an absolutely crucial distinction between words as counted by a word processor and words as listed in a dictionary (§2.1). In §2.2 we explain how phrases and clauses are built around words. And then in §2.3 to §2.16 we give brief indications of the content of Chapters 3 to 16, so to some extent this chapter can be used as a rough guide to the structure of the book.

Our plan for organizing our coverage of the grammar of English involves defining a particularly simple kind of unit called the **canonical clause**. We concentrate entirely on the structure of canonical clauses right up to the end of Chapter 8. Then from Chapter 9 to Chapter 16 we cover the details of how other kinds of clause depart from the pattern of the canonical ones. The initial sketch of canonical clauses is in this chapter (§2.4), and the fuller account is in Chapter 4. At the end of this chapter there is an appendix summarizing our notational conventions.

2.1 Word Forms and Lexemes

There are two completely different entities that people call ‘words’. To see that the difference is real, ask yourself how many words there are in this sentence:

[1] *We love our cat, and she loves her cats.*

Most people will say it has nine words. Any word processor will agree. And there’s nothing wrong with that answer, which takes words to be unbroken sequences of letters.

But it’s not compatible with the idea that a dictionary LISTS THE WORDS IN A LANGUAGE and explains their meanings. Some of the words in [1] are missing from typical dictionaries. You’ll find a dictionary entry for *cat*, but none for *cats*; and *love* will get an entry but *loves* won’t. Why? The answer is that the dictionary is implicitly treating *cats* as a special form of *cat* that is required when reference is to any number of cats other than one, and it treats *loves* as the form of *love* that you have to use after *he* or *she* (but not after *I* or *we*). It is in effect assuming that your

knowledge of the grammar of English will suffice to tell you such things, which means the dictionary can ignore them.

You'll probably also find if you look up *our* that although there's an entry for it, that entry says little more than that it is the 'possessive form of the pronoun *we*', or something similar. (We'd use the term *genitive* rather than 'possessive', but for now you can treat the two terms as equivalent.) And the entry for *her* will say it's a form of the pronoun *she*.

So if we want to stick with the obviously true statement that [1] is nine words long, we need a term other than 'word' for the units that get full entries in dictionaries. Most linguists call them *lexemes*.

When we want to emphasize that we intend the other sense of 'word', we may refer to letter strings as *word forms*. Sometimes, though, the distinction won't matter: when talking about *and* we can just say it's a word, because the lexeme it belongs to has only one word form.

This means we can avoid the apparent contradiction: [1] is correctly described as containing nine words (i.e., word forms): it contains *and*, *cat*, *cats*, *her*, *love*, *our*, *she*, and *we*. But what a dictionary needs to list is a different matter. [1] contains word forms of just five lexemes. We can give them names by putting their most basic word form in bold italics: the five lexemes are ***and***, ***cat***, ***love***, ***she***, and ***we***.

A related point is that some lexemes happen to be written with an internal space. For example, most grammarians would treat ***no one*** as a single lexeme, just like its synonym ***nobody***, since absolutely no word can separate the two parts without changing the meaning. A small number of other lexemes (not many) are written with a space: note the underlined items in sentences like *It sort of misled me*; *Take this in case you get hungry*; *It is no doubt apocryphal*; *Santa Cruz is north of Monterey*; *He stepped back so as not to be seen*.

The distinction between word forms and lexemes is important in many practical ways. A literary scholar assessing Shakespeare's word use, or a developmental psychologist studying the size of a child's vocabulary, should surely count lexemes. Learning ***give*** and ***take*** should count as adding two words to a child's vocabulary – not ten (*give*, *take*, *gives*, *takes*, *gave*, *took*, *given*, *taken*, *giving*, *taking*).

2.1.1 Lexeme Categories

Lexemes belong to clusters that have strikingly different grammatical properties. These clusters of grammatically similar lexemes are known as *lexical categories*. (Traditional grammars call them 'parts of speech', an odd term that we will not use.) We'll employ nine lexical categories (some having important subcategories), listed in [2].

[2]	Verb	<i>The dog <u>barked</u>.</i>	<i>It <u>is</u> impossible.</i>	<i>I <u>have</u> a headache.</i>
	Noun	<i>The <u>dog</u> barked.</i>	<i>Where is <u>Sue</u>?</i>	<i>We <u>saw</u> you.</i>
	Determinative	<i><u>The</u> dog barked.</i>	<i>I need <u>some</u> nails.</i>	<i><u>All</u> things change.</i>
	Adjective	<i>He's <u>very</u> old.</i>	<i>It looks <u>empty</u>.</i>	<i>I need a <u>new</u> car.</i>
	Adverb	<i>She spoke <u>clearly</u>.</i>	<i>He's <u>very</u> old.</i>	<i>I <u>almost</u> died.</i>
	Preposition	<i>It's <u>in</u> the car.</i>	<i>I gave it <u>to</u> Sam.</i>	<i>Here's a list <u>of</u> them.</i>
	Subordinator	<i>It's odd <u>that</u> he's late.</i>	<i>Ask <u>whether</u> she's in.</i>	<i>Let's see <u>if</u> it's for sale.</i>
	Coordinator	<i>I got up <u>and</u> left.</i>	<i>Jo <u>or</u> the kids took it.</i>	<i>It's cheap <u>but</u> strong.</i>
	Interjection	<i><u>Yes</u>, that's all right.</i>	<i><u>Hey</u>, don't do that!</i>	<i><u>Gosh</u>, that hurt!</i>

These terms have been used in many earlier grammars (though there is wide variation with regard to how many categories are assumed). For reasons we carefully explain in [Chapters 3 to 7](#) we differ from earlier grammars and dictionaries in the number, name, and membership of these categories, even with regard to some quite basic and simple lexemes such as *if*, *in*, *may*, *my*, *out*, *since*, *that*, *though*, and *your*. But this isn't a matter of whim: we have evidence and arguments to support our categorization as opposed to the traditional ones.

The two largest and most important categories, of course, are verb (V) and noun (N). If you have an average vocabulary, you will know way more than a thousand verbs, and probably more than ten thousand nouns.

2.1.2 Lexemes Belonging to More than One Category

Numerous lexemes belong to more than one category. Or, to put that more carefully, there are many cases of two or more lexemes sharing a **shape** – having the same spoken or written form. Such lexemes may have similar meanings or be semantically distinct:

- *Visit* is a noun in *We enjoyed his visit*, but a verb in *He decided to visit*.
- *Professional* is a noun in *She's a real professional*, but an adjective in *She's really professional*.
- *Open* is a verb in *Open the window*, but an adjective in *The window remained open*.
- *Little* is an adjective in *a little child* but a determinative in *little chance of success*.
- *Light* is a noun in *the speed of light*, a verb in *light the candles*, and an adjective in *light clothing*.
- *Fast* is an adjective in *I'm a fast worker*, an adverb in *I work fast*, a noun in *I started a fast*, and a verb in *I decided to fast*.

Thousands of other cases could be listed. This doesn't usually cause problems for grammatical description: there are usually very clear grammatical criteria for category membership, and distinct lexemes with the same spelling can always be given different names if necessary: *visit*₁ and *visit*₂, or somewhat more helpfully *visit*_v and *visit*_n.

Things get interesting when there is a linguistic change in progress. A word in one category may start to take on properties of another in the usage of more and more speakers as time goes by. The word form spelled *fun* provides a clear example. It

represents a noun lexeme in *We had a lot of fun*, but for several decades it has been evolving a second life as an adjective lexeme: younger people say *It was so fun* (paralleling *It was so enjoyable*), and some speakers say things like *It was the funnest thing I ever did*, using the superlative adjective suffix *-est* (see §6.1.1).

2.2 Phrases and Clauses

For some lexeme categories there are corresponding **phrases**. Notice that ‘phrase’ is a technical term for us. Dictionaries define ‘phrase’ as simply any sequence of words associated with a meaning, but that could include sequences like *stand in the way of*, or *take for granted*, or *shut up and go away*; none of these are phrases in our analysis.

2.2.1 Heads and Dependents

A **phrase** in our terms is a constituent (see §1.3.1) with a word functioning as **head** and some number (zero or more) of **dependents**. There are verb phrases, which have verbs as their heads; there is a phrase called an adjective phrase, which has an adjective as its head; and so on.

Every non-head constituent in a phrase functions as a dependent, but there are many special cases of the dependent function. Two of the most important special cases are **complement** (an integral and sometimes obligatory part of a phrase that the specific lexical head permits or requires) and **adjunct** (an optional modifying constituent). An **object** is a special type of complement; a **modifier** is one type of adjunct.

2.2.2 Phrasal Categories

As already implied, **PHRASES HAVE CATEGORIES** just as lexemes do. (This is a departure from traditional grammars, which do not assume categories for phrases.) For the first six of the nine lexical categories in [2] there are phrasal categories whose categories are named after their heads in an obvious way: we get verb phrases (VP) like *swept the floor*; noun phrases (NP) like *the third problem*; determinative phrases (DP) like *almost every*; adjective phrases (AdjP) like *very cute*; adverb phrases (AdvP) like *very probably*; and preposition phrases (PP) like *on the table*.

But it’s not just lexemes that function as heads; phrases can also be heads of larger phrases: *the president* is an NP with the noun *president* as its head, but *even the president* is a larger NP, with the NP *the president* as its head.

Subordinators and **coordinators** are different: they don’t have corresponding phrases. The constituent *that he’s late* in *It’s odd that he’s late* isn’t a ‘subordinator phrase’; the lexeme *that* is just functioning as a marker of subordinate clause status (see Chapter 11). Similarly, the constituent *or the kids* in *Jo or the kids took it* isn’t a ‘coordinator phrase’; it’s just an NP headed by the smaller NP *the kids*, with *or*

functioning as a marker signalling that it is joined with *Jo* to make a coordination (see [Chapter 15](#)).

Can **interjections** ever be heads of phrases? It isn't clear, and we won't try to settle it. (Grammarians typically say very little about interjections, and we don't plan to be an exception.) It would depend on how you might analyse expressions like *hell yeah*, *oh boy*, *god damn*, *holy smoke*, and other colloquialisms seldom studied in detail. Interjections can either interrupt a sentence at almost any point, or occur as utterances on their own. They are often used impulsively to express an immediate emotion (*Oops!*) or reaction (*Yuck!*), yet they're not instinctive. They have style properties – some are polite and respectable (*Bother!*), while others are blasphemous or obscene. And they're different in different languages: a French speaker doesn't react to a sharp pain with a cry of 'Ouch!', but rather with 'Aïe!', and a Korean speaker says 'Aya!'. Dictionaries need to list interjections, and students of a foreign language have to learn them.

Interjections do perhaps provide an answer to a question that popular writers on language seemed quite excited about a few years ago: the relation of emoji to language. Are emoji taking over because of smartphone communications? It seems to us that the answer is no, they couldn't possibly, because emoji are used in texts and online messages in very much the same way interjections are used in speech. That's why using too many of them looks childish, and why attempts to make statements or tell stories with them don't really work – the reader has to simply guess almost all of the story.

2.2.3 Clauses

For one very important kind of phrase, arguably the most important in this book, we use the separate term **clause**. A clause is a special type of phrase: one that has a VP as its head. We use the function term **predicate** for the VP head of a clause, but in English, VPs are the only category that can function as a predicate.

The shortest possible clause is an imperative like *Run!*, consisting of just a verb and nothing else, and the most basic kind of declarative clause – one that can express a statement – contains at least one noun and one verb, and possibly nothing else, as in *Ava disagrees*.

To summarize thus far, the lexemes of a language can be roughly equated with the headwords in its dictionary. Some have distinct word forms, while others have just one fixed form. Each lexeme belongs to one of the nine lexical categories. Lexemes belonging to different categories may share a shape (e.g., *run_v* and *run_N*). Six of the lexical categories (V, N, D, Adj, Adv, and P) have corresponding phrasal categories. A phrase can have either a lexeme-level head or a phrase-level head. Phrasal categories may also have dependents, such as complements or adjuncts. A clause is a special kind of phrase with a VP as its predicate (i.e., its phrasal head). In the following sections, sketching the contents of [Chapters 3 to 16](#), we say more about

the members of various lexical and phrasal categories and about the different kinds of dependents the phrases contain.

2.3 Verbs and Verb Phrases

A verb (V) characteristically functions as the **head** of a verb phrase (VP), and a VP almost always functions as a **predicate** in the structure of a **clause**. The predicate typically combines with a phrase in **subject** function to form a clause. In these examples, the VP predicates are underlined and have the head verb as their first word: *The doctor arrived*; *Liam was late*; *We live in New York*.

As the head of the VP, the verb largely determines what complements are permitted in the rest of the phrase. *Approach* is **transitive**, which means it permits an **object** but *arrive* is **intransitive**, so it does not, which is why *We approached the airport* is grammatical but **We arrived the airport* is not. *Seem* allows an AdjP as a **predicative complement**, but *see* does not, so we find *He seems mature* but not **He sees mature*. *Consist* requires a PP headed by *of*, so we get *It consisted of bread and water*, but not **It consisted bread and water* or **It consisted*. And so on.

The most distinctive grammatical property of verbs is the different forms they take to signal particular grammatical properties. These different forms are known as **inflectional** forms, or simply **inflections**. In particular, verbs almost always show a contrast of **tense** between **past** and **present**, mostly signalled by an added ending in the past tense (*bake* / *baked*), but sometimes by a change in the middle (*take* / *took*). We use the term **preterite** for a past tense form that is typically (with a couple of dozen exceptions like *hit*) signalled by some kind of inflectional change in the verb.

Most verbs have two present-tense forms and a past-tense (preterite) form. The choice of the present-tense form depends on the **number** and **person** of the subject. Number contrasts **singular** (e.g., *the girl*, *she*) and **plural** (e.g., *the girls*, *they*), while person contrasts **1st person** (*I*, *we*), **2nd person** (*you*), and **3rd person** (other NPs like *the girl*, *the girls*, *she*, *they*). The preterite and present tense forms are shown in [3]:

[3]

PRETERITE	PRESENT	
	3RD PERSON SINGULAR	PLAIN PRESENT
<i>Nia <u>worked</u> in the city.</i>	<i>Nia <u>works</u> in the city.</i>	<i>They <u>work</u> in the city.</i>
<i>He really <u>missed</u> her.</i>	<i>He really <u>misses</u> her.</i>	<i>I really <u>miss</u> her.</i>

Verbs have other inflectional forms too, such as the one with the ending *-ing* seen in *They are working in the city*.

2.3.1 Subcategories

The vast majority of the verbs in the dictionary are the ordinary ones that we call **lexical verbs**, but there is a very important subcategory called the **auxiliary verbs**. These dozen verbs have several special properties. One is that unlike lexical verbs they precede the subject in certain constructions. These include the closed interrogative clause discussed more fully in §10.2:

- [4]
- | | | | |
|----|------------------------------|----|----------------------------|
| | AUXILIARY VERB | | LEXICAL VERB |
| a. | <u>Can</u> you speak French? | b. | * <u>Speak</u> you French? |

Although [b] is ungrammatical, a closed interrogative corresponding to *You speak French* can be formed by adding the auxiliary verb **do** or some other auxiliary verb like *will* or *can*.

2.3.2 Verb Meanings

Many verbs – though nowhere near all – denote some sort of action or process: *abandon*, *demolish*, *endure*, *remove*, etc. By itself, however, this is of hardly any help in identifying verbs, for in most cases the same actions or processes can be denoted by nouns: *abandonment*, *demolition*, *endurance*, *removal*, etc. In those examples the noun differs from the verb in morphological form, but in other verb-noun pairs the shape is shared, as with *attack_v* and *attack_n*.

2.4 Complements in the Clause

Chapter 4 is about what kinds of **complements** there can be in a clause, complement being one kind of dependent. The choice of the specific head verb for a VP largely determines its complements, often making a specific kind of complement obligatory or prohibited. In the structure of a clause, the **subject** is the one complement that is not inside the VP. The others are **internal complements** (internal to the VP). Five very simple basic types of clause with different kinds of complement are illustrated in [5].

[5]

	SUBJECT	PREDICATE		
i	<i>Many people</i> Subject:NP	<i>hike.</i> Head:Verb		
ii	<i>Many people</i> Subject:NP	<i>feel</i> Head:Verb	<i>happy.</i> PredComp:AdjP	
iii	<i>Many people</i> Subject:NP	<i>enjoy</i> Head:Verb	<i>hiking.</i> DirectObject:NP	
iv	<i>Hiking</i> Subject:NP	<i>makes</i> Head:Verb	<i>many people</i> DirectObject:NP	<i>happy.</i> PredComp:AdjP
v	<i>Hiking</i> Subject:NP	<i>gives</i> Head:Verb	<i>many people</i> IndirectObject:NP	<i>pleasure.</i> DirectObject:NP

These clauses are all of a very simple sort that we'll call a **canonical clause**. Our strategy will be to begin by describing (in [Chapters 3 to 8](#)) the major types of phrases and the structure of canonical clauses, and then review all the various ways in which a clause can be **non-canonical**.

We define a canonical clause as a **POSITIVE, DECLARATIVE, ACTIVE, NON-COORDINATE, MAIN CLAUSE WITH THE USUAL CONSTITUENT ORDER**. (All of these terms will all be explained as we go on.) To illustrate briefly, consider [\[5iii\]](#): *Many people enjoy hiking*. It consists of a subject followed by a predicate VP.

- It is **positive** (not negative like *Many people don't enjoy hiking* – see [Chapter 9](#)).
- It is of the **declarative** clause type (not interrogative like *Do many people enjoy hiking?*, described in [Chapter 10](#)).
- It is **active** (not passive like *Hiking is enjoyed by many people*; see [§16.2](#)).
- It is **non-coordinate** (that is, not composed with a clause-joining word like *but*, as in *Some go skiing but many people enjoy hiking*; see [Chapter 15](#) on coordination).
- It is a **main** clause (not a subordinate part of a larger clause, like the bracketed bit in *I thought [that many people enjoyed hiking]*; see [Chapter 11](#)).
- It has the **usual** default order for English sentences: subject NP + head verb + object NP, rather than some special order motivated by stylistic or discourse-sensitive concerns, as in *Hiking, many people enjoy* (see [§16.8](#)).

Canonical clauses get nearly all the attention until the end of [Chapter 8](#). The diverse ways of constructing non-canonical clauses are treated fully in [Chapters 9 to 16](#).

2.5 Nouns and Noun Phrases

[Chapter 5](#) deals with the very complex internal structure of noun phrases, and covers both nouns and determinatives. In this brief summary we separate the two.

2.5.1 Nouns

Nouns are even more numerous than verbs: more than half of the lexemes in a typical dictionary are nouns, and word forms of noun lexemes occur far more frequently than forms of any other category of lexemes, in either speech or writing.

Nouns primarily function as the lexical heads of NPs, and NPs have their own specific range of functions, including subject in a clause (*Most pigs like acorns*) and object in a VP (*Acorns please most pigs*). They display an inflectional contrast between **singular** and **plural** forms: *cat* / *cats*; *day* / *days*; *man* / *men*; *woman* / *women*; *child* / *children*; *stimulus* / *stimuli*; *phenomenon* / *phenomena*; etc. In

addition, almost all have a contrast between **plain** and **genitive** forms: *man* / *man's*; *men* / *men's*; *day* / *day's*; *days* / *days'* etc.

Members of a small set of phrasal categories can function as pre-head dependents in an NP. These include **determinative phrases** (DPs) and **adjective phrases** (AdjPs). Determinatives are lexemes such as *the*, *this*, *a(n)*, and *some*; DPs with a dependent are phrases like *hardly any* or *just about all*. But DPs and AdjPs can't function as dependents in some other phrases. Contrast *massive destruction* and *clever students* with **massive destroy* and **clever studios*. The asterisked phrases are ungrammatical because the head words are respectively a verb (*destroy*) and an adjective (*studious*); adjectives cannot occur as dependents with them.

Our noun category covers **common nouns** (like all the examples given so far) and **proper nouns** (Tyrell, Washington, China, Microsoft, Europe, etc.). It also includes the important subcategory of **pronouns**, including the **personal pronouns** (*I*, *you*, *he*, *she*, *it*, etc.), **interrogative pronouns** (such as those underlined in *Who said that?*, *What do they recommend?*), and **relative pronouns** (the underlined words in *the guy who said that* and *the book which they recommend*).

Contrasts with Traditional Grammar

Traditional grammars treat pronouns as a distinct category, often in a different chapter, rather than as a subcategory of 'noun'. Pronouns do differ from other nouns: they take dependents only rarely (*poor old me*; *lucky you*), and they have strikingly different inflection (see §5.8.3), but they share with common and proper nouns the crucial property of functioning as lexical heads in subjects and objects in clauses: compare *Pigs like acorns* with *They like acorns*, or *You can trust Jim* with *You can trust him*. Traditional grammars, because they don't treat pronouns as a subcategory of nouns, frequently need to use the phrase 'nouns or pronouns'. We don't. And when we say 'nouns' without qualification, this always includes pronouns.

Noun Meanings

Words that directly denote kinds of physical objects – such as persons, animals, plants, and artifacts – always belong to the noun category: *man*, *woman*, *cat*, *tiger*, *flower*, *car*, *computer*, etc. But there are also innumerable nouns that don't denote physical objects. In §2.3, we have already mentioned nouns denoting actions. We also have abstract nouns such as *absence*, *communism*, *computation*, *fact*, *failure*, *idea*, *manliness*, *sensitivity*, etc. So we can't define nouns in terms of what they denote (though traditional grammars try to do exactly that). We can, however, give an initial idea of the category by saying that it consists of words denoting kinds of physical objects and **WORDS WHICH BEHAVE GRAMMATICALLY LIKE THEM**.

2.5.2 Determinatives

Every member of the determinative category can head phrases that function as **determiners** in NP structure: *the dog*, *a cat*, *some milk*, *any errors*, *several days*, etc. But it's crucial to distinguish between the CATEGORY **determinative** (a small class of words including the articles) and the FUNCTION **determiner**, for two reasons:

- The determiner function is not always filled by DPs: it can also be filled by **genitive NPs**, as in *the boy's behaviour*, *a friend's car*, *Anil's spouse*, *my arm*, etc. These all contain one NP; they are all NPs nested one inside another. For example, *the boy's behaviour* is an NP, but so is *the boy's*, which functions as the determiner within the larger NP.
- DPs are not restricted to determiner function in NP structure. In the case of *The angrier he gets*, *the uglier he looks*, for example, the DP *the* is a modifier of a somewhat unusual AdjP.
- The two commonest and most familiar determinatives are *the* (the most frequent word in English texts, traditionally known as the **definite article**) and *a* or *an* (the two forms of the **indefinite article**). They are the most basic indicators of definiteness and indefiniteness.

The articles show no inflectional contrasts and are ungradable, like most determinatives. *This* and *that*, however, inflect for number (*these* and *those* are the plural forms), while others inflect for comparative grade: *many* (*many* / *more* / *most*), *much* (*much* / *more* / *most*), *few* (*few* / *fewer* / *fewest*), and *little* (as in *little patience*).

Determinative Meanings

If an NP has a determiner like *the*, *that*, or any genitive NP, it's definite. That indicates that the speaker assumes the addressee will be able to identify the referent from the content of the NP. If I say 'the dog', I'm presuming you'll know which dog I mean. There's no such presumption if I use an indefinite NP like *a dog*.

Contrasts with Traditional Grammar

Most traditional grammars don't have a primary word category corresponding to our determinatives; they include some uses of determinatives in the adjective category (though the definite and indefinite articles *the* and *a(n)* are often separated out) and others in the pronoun subcategory.

2.6 Adjectives and Adverbs

Chapter 6 deals with both adjectives and adverbs because they are closely related: the vast majority of adverb lexemes are formed by adding the suffix *-ly* to the basic

shape of an adjective of related meaning. The adjective *bad* yields the adverb *badly*, *vicious* yields *viciously*, *intelligent* yields *intelligently*, and so on.

2.6.1 Adjectives

Most adjectives (or rather, the AdjPs that they head) can function either as pre-head modifier in an NP or predicative complement in a VP:

- [6] i a. *some hot soup* b. *The soup is hot.*
 ii a. *a jealous husband* b. *He became jealous.*

In the [a] examples *hot* modifies the NP *hot soup* and *jealous* modifies the NP *jealous husband*. Not all such modifiers are adjectives (or AdjPs), but these are the most common.

In the [b] examples the AdjPs are complements in the VP; in this construction the adjective generally occurs after the verb *be* or one of a small subcategory of similar verbs such as *become*, *feel*, *seem*, etc. This is called the predicative function of adjectives. (Predicative complement is a special case of the complement function.)

Many of the adjectives that are most typical of the category show inflection for grade, with a contrast between three forms, as illustrated in [7]:

- [7] PLAIN COMPARATIVE SUPERLATIVE
Kofi is tall. *Kofi is taller than Rashid.* *Kofi is the tallest of them all.*

Again, we use plain for the morphologically basic form of the adjective, while the comparative and superlative forms are indicated by suffixes.

Adjective Meanings

Among the most common and obvious members of the adjective category are lexemes that denote properties of persons, animals, and other physical objects: properties relating to size and shape (*big*, *small*, *tall*, *long*, *wide*, *round*), age (*old*, *young*), color (*black*, *white*, *red*), value (*good*, *bad*), and character (*kind*, *patient*, *cruel*, *generous*). But adjectives have many other kinds of meaning not captured by this simplistic observation.

Differences from Traditional Grammar

As we've said, we separate off determinatives from adjectives. Some traditional grammars distinguish 'limiting adjectives' from 'descriptive adjectives' in an attempt to capture the distinction.

2.6.2 Adverbs

AdvPs mostly function as modifiers in VPs, AdjPs, or AdvPs. In the following examples the modifying AdvP is single-underlined, and the head of the modified element is double-underlined:

- [8]
- | | | | |
|-----|-------------------|--|---|
| i | MODIFYING A VP | <i>She <u>spoke</u> <u>quite</u> <u>clearly</u>.</i> | <i>I <u>often</u> <u>see</u> <u>them</u>.</i> |
| ii | MODIFYING AN AdjP | <i>a <u>remarkably</u> <u>good</u> <u>idea</u></i> | <i>It's <u>very</u> <u>expensive</u>.</i> |
| iii | MODIFYING AN AdvP | <i>She <u>drove</u> <u>rather</u> <u>slowly</u>.</i> | <i>It'll end <u>fairly</u> <u>soon</u>.</i> |

Function is the major factor distinguishing adverbs from adjectives. The two main functions of AdjPs exemplified in [8] are as modifier in an NP and predicative complement in a VP with a head verb like *be*, *become*, or *seem*. AdvPs do not normally occur with these functions: **a jealously husband* and **He became very jealously* are ungrammatical.

The great majority of adverbs are derived by adding the suffix *-ly* to the plain form of an adjective: *careful* / *carefully*; *certain* / *certainly*; *fortunate* / *fortunately*, and so on. A smaller set of quite common adverbs are not derived from adjectives at all: *almost*, *also*, *always*, *not*, *often*, *quite*, *rather*, *seldom*, *soon*, *too*, *very*, etc.

A small number of adverbs inflect for grade: *soon* is one, others include two that have the same form as adjectives, namely *fast* and *hard*. Many others participate in the system of grade through modifiers: *very carefully*, *quite calmly*, *more recently than that*, and so on.

2.7 Prepositions

Prepositions occur as heads of **preposition phrases** (PPs), which function as dependents in constructions headed by ANY of the three largest categories, verbs, nouns, and adjectives. In the examples in [9], we use single underlining for the preposition, brackets for the PP, and double underlining for the head element in the phrase where the PP is a dependent:

- [9]
- | | | | |
|-----|----------------------|--|---|
| i | DEPENDENT in a VP | <i>I <u>sat</u> [<u>by the door</u>].</i> | <i>I <u>saw</u> her [<u>after lunch</u>].</i> |
| ii | DEPENDENT in an NP | <i>the <u>man</u> [<u>in the moon</u>]</i> | <i>two <u>days</u> [<u>before that</u>]</i> |
| iii | DEPENDENT in an AdjP | <i><u>keen</u> [<u>on golf</u>]</i> | <i><u>superior</u> [<u>to the others</u>]</i> |

The clearest members of the preposition category are followed by NP complements. We'll call these **objects**, like the NP complements of transitive verbs. In the following PPs, the prepositions are underlined and the objects are in brackets: *in [the garden]*; *on [a small table]*; *to [Antarctica]*; *despite [all that bad weather]*; *without [a moment's hesitation]*. We'll see later that many prepositions take other types of complement, or none at all.

2.7.1 Preposition Stranding

The commonest prepositions exhibit the contrasts shown below (the prepositions are underlined):

- | | | |
|------|---|--|
| [10] | FRONTED PREPOSITION | STRANDED PREPOSITION |
| | i a. <u>On</u> which site did you see it? | b. Which site did you see it <u>on</u> ? |
| | ii a. the tweet [<u>to</u> which she referred] | b. the tweet [which she referred <u>to</u>] |

In [ia] we see a type of interrogative clause, an **open interrogative** (see §10.2.5). It begins with a PP containing the interrogative word *which*. The possible answers to the question it asks form an open list of possibilities. In the simplest clauses expressing these answers the *on*-phrase is at the end of the VP. In the open interrogative clause in [ia] the whole PP, *on which site*, is **fronted** – it's at the beginning of the clause. In [ib], however, only the object *which site* is fronted: the preposition remains in the PP's basic position. In cases like [ib] the preposition is said to be **stranded**. Stranding of prepositions occurs in a number of constructions; [10ii] involves a **relative clause** (bracketed) – a clause functioning as a post-head modifier in NP structure (see Chapter 12). The ability of a word to be either fronted or stranded provides a particularly clear indication that it's a preposition.

2.7.2 Preposition Meanings

Most of the commonest prepositions express (or are capable of expressing) meanings that involve relations in space or time:

- | | | |
|------|-------|---|
| [11] | SPACE | <u>across</u> the road, <u>at</u> the corner, <u>by</u> the church, <u>in</u> New York, <u>inside</u> the house, <u>off</u> the platform, <u>on</u> the roof, <u>under</u> a tarpaulin, ... |
| | TIME | <u>after</u> lunch, <u>before</u> Easter, <u>since</u> last year, <u>during</u> the war, <u>on</u> Tuesday, <u>in</u> two weeks, <u>into</u> December, <u>for</u> a long time, ... |

But this does not hold for all prepositions: *despite*, *except*, *notwithstanding*, *of*, and *without* are examples of prepositions whose meanings in contemporary English don't relate to spatial or temporal relations at all. So we could never base a useful definition for the category on reference to location. But it can be regarded as the core semantic property shared by the most central and typical prepositions.

2.7.3 Contrasts with Traditional Grammar

In traditional grammar, prepositions are **DEFINED** as words that take NPs as objects. This is too restrictive, as we'll show in Chapter 7. We argue there that *before* is a preposition not just in [12i] but in [ii] and [iii] as well, and the traditional analysis is wrong.

- | | | |
|------|---|-----------------------------|
| [12] | OUR ANALYSIS | TRADITIONAL ANALYSIS |
| i | <i>I knew it <u>before</u> our meeting.</i> | Preposition |
| ii | <i>I knew it <u>before</u> we met.</i> | Preposition |
| iii | <i>I knew it <u>before</u>.</i> | 'Subordinating conjunction' |
| | | 'Adverb' |

To begin with, though, we'll exemplify prepositions just with words that everyone would agree are prepositions.

2.8 Adjuncts

Adjuncts, surveyed briefly in [Chapter 8](#), comprise a highly diverse range of optional dependents that modify the meaning of a clause in a large number of ways. Not being complements, they can always be omitted regardless of what the head verb is; and they can pretty much be added to any clause – though of course if their meaning is inappropriate, the clause may sound strange.

They are of many different categories: NP in *We went home last night*; PP in *We went home in a taxi*; AdvP in *We went home quite late*; AdjP in *We went home fairly drunk*; clauses in *We went home laughing about it* and *We went home to feed the cat*. They also make numerous different kinds of modification to the meaning of a clause: manner and means (*vigorously*; *by hammering it*); spatial and temporal location (*in the kitchen*; *on Tuesday*); degree and intensity (*extremely*; *to an amazing extent*); purpose and reason (*for my own benefit*; *to get to the other side*); concession and condition (*although it's pointless*; *if you don't like it*); domain (*musically*); modality (*probably*); evaluation (*fortunately for us*) etc.

We distinguish two types of adjunct: **modifiers**, which are fully integrated into the syntactic structure, and **supplements**, which are more loosely attached in syntactic terms, and are generally set off by commas, dashes, or parentheses in writing, and by intonational phrase separation in speech: the underlined constituent is a modifier in *Paul has been regrettably intransigent about the plan*, while a roughly synonymous underlined constituent that is unambiguously a supplement is seen in *Paul has been – and I hate to say this – intransigent about the plan*.

2.9 Negation

One way in which a clause can depart from being canonical involves **polarity**. We only count **positive** clauses like *He resigned* as canonical. But a clause can be **negative** like *He didn't resign*. There are grammatical consequences of the distinction; for example, compare *He didn't resign, did he?* with **He didn't resign, didn't he?*. Such contrasts are discussed in detail in [Chapter 9](#).

Negation can affect a whole clause (*He wasn't kind*) or just a non-clause sub-constituent (*He was unkind*); it can be marked on the verb (*Don't tell them anything*) or on a non-verbal constituent (*Tell them nothing*); it can be marked by a separate word (*This is not what I wanted*) or in the inflection of a verb (*This isn't what I wanted*); it can be absolute (*This doesn't happen at all*) or approximate (*This hardly happens at all*). Negation interacts interestingly with other phenomena, including items that simply cannot appear in positive clauses (compare *She hasn't been here in ages* with **She has been here in ages*, or *It doesn't happen at all* with **It happens at all*).

2.10 Clause Type

Canonical clauses are **declarative**, the type of clause that is characteristically used to make a statement: *The dog is clever*. But English has three other types of main clause (see [Chapter 10](#)): **interrogative** (mostly used for asking questions, either closed as in *Is the dog clever?* or open as in *How clever is the dog?*); **imperative** (*Fetch the toy rabbit!*); and **exclamative** (used in expressing exclamatory comments: *What a clever dog he is!*). They differ in grammatical properties like word order and absence or presence of certain words, not just in meaning.

2.11 Subordinate Clauses

The clauses we call canonical are, by stipulation, **main** clauses. But a clause can be included or embedded as a subpart of a larger clause. Such clauses are called **subordinate** clauses; they're the topic of [Chapter 11](#).

The default kind of subordinate clause is called a **content** clause and may differ from canonical clauses in various ways, one of them being the presence of a member of the **subordinator** category: *that*, *whether*, and a few others. The bracketed parts of the [b] examples in [13] are content clauses:

- | | | |
|------|------------------------------|--|
| [13] | MAIN CLAUSE | SUBORDINATE CLAUSE |
| | i a. <i>He did his best.</i> | b. <i>I realize [<u>that</u> he did his best].</i> |
| | ii a. <i>Will he win?</i> | b. <i>I wonder [<u>whether</u> he will win].</i> |

He did his best in [ia] is a **main** clause. In this example it forms a sentence by itself. Addition of the subordinator *that* forms a **subordinate** clause. A subordinate clause normally functions as a dependent within the structure of a larger clause or phrase. In [ib], *that he did his best* is a dependent of the *realize* VP, and hence is part of the larger clause *I realize that he did his best*. In *The fact [that he did his best] is irrelevant*, it is a dependent in the NP headed by the noun *fact* and hence is part of the larger noun phrase *the fact that he did his best*.

The main clause *Will he win?* in [iia] is a closed interrogative, marked as such by having the subject *he* AFTER the auxiliary verb *will*. *Whether* (or alternatively *if*) in the subordinate version in [iib] marks it simultaneously as a subordinate clause and as a closed interrogative clause: here the subject has its default position before the verb.

Our category of subordinators is much smaller than traditional grammar's category of 'subordinating conjunctions'. We assume prepositions can take clause complements, so that the preposition *after* is present not only in *after the flood* but also in *after we were flooded*. Traditional grammars – wrongly, we think – call *after* a 'subordinating conjunction' in the latter case.

Content clauses can be declarative, interrogative, or exclamative; imperatives can only be main clauses.

2.12 Relative Constructions

A structurally different type of clause that is subordinate and thus non-canonical is the one seen in *who they had never even thought of*. It is not a content clause: it has an unexpected *who* at the beginning, though it is not an open interrogative, and it has no object following *of* (a preposition that requires an object). It is a **relative clause** (see [Chapter 12](#)) and can be used to modify an NP, as in *a candidate who they had never even thought of*. The relative clause functions as a modifier, fully integrated into the syntactic structure of a clause. Other relative clauses can function as supplements, which are much more loosely attached: *Susan Jones, who they had never even thought of*.

2.12.1 Contrasts with Traditional Grammar

In traditional accounts, *that* is called a relative pronoun. It isn't. It's the same subordinator you see introducing declarative content clauses. In addition, unlike traditional grammars, we note that some relative constructions (like *what Frankenstein created*) are NPs, not clauses.

2.13 Comparative and Superlative Constructions

English has an array of ways to use subordinate (hence non-canonical) clauses in expressing various kinds of comparison ([Chapter 13](#)), both to place one thing above another in a ranking (*taller than the Empire State Building*) and to place something at the extreme maximum on some scale (*the tallest building in town*). There are **comparative clauses** that occur in comparatives making statements of inequality like *taller than I had expected*, superlative expressions like *the tallest that I had ever seen*, comparisons of equality like *as tall as I had expected*, and statements about similarity like *the same as I had expected*.

2.14 Non-Finite Clauses

Until this point the clauses we have focused on have tensed verbs. At the beginning of [Chapter 14](#) we define a class of **finite clauses**, which includes the ones with tensed

verbs and certain others, and then consider the others, the ones that are **non-finite**. They are of five types: *to*-infinitival (*for you to be in danger*), bare infinitival (*lest you be in danger*), gerund-participial (*your being in danger*), past-participial (*had you been in danger*), and verbless (*with you in danger*).

2.14.1 Contrasts with Traditional Grammar

Most of the clauses we discuss in this chapter would not be considered clauses at all in traditional grammar.

2.15 Coordination

Words like *and*, *or*, *but*, and *nor* are **coordinators**. They function as markers of the joining together of two or more constituents having equal syntactic status. This equal status is typically reflected in the way (with some exceptions) each one can stand in place of the whole coordination. For example:

- [14] i a. *We need a long table and at least eight chairs.*
 ii a. *We need a long table.* b. *We need at least eight chairs.*

In [i] we have a coordination of *a long table* and *at least eight chairs*, each of which can occur in place of the whole, as you can see from the two examples in [ii]. Neither of the objects in [ii] is a head in [i], and neither is a dependent. Coordination isn't a head-plus-dependent construction at all (details in [Chapter 15](#)).

2.15.1 Contrasts with Traditional Grammar

We diverge from traditional grammar terminology in that (like most modern linguists) we take subordinator and coordinator to be entirely distinct categories – not subcategories of a larger category of ‘conjunctions’ made up of ‘coordinating conjunctions’ and ‘subordinating conjunctions’. They are certainly quite different in function: there is no construction where a single function can be filled either by a subordinator or by a coordinator. This contrasts with, for example, the relation between the three main subcategories of noun: common noun, proper noun, and pronoun. Words from any of these subcategories can fill the head position in an NP, whereas subordinators and coordinators don't fill anything like the same positions.

We also avoid the term ‘conjunction’ because it has a completely different sense in logic, where it denotes the semantic relation that *and* expresses (in contrast to *or*: the logical relation corresponding to *or* is called ‘disjunction’).

2.16 Information Packaging

Languages always allow for distinct ways of saying essentially the same thing using syntactically different constructions. Speakers can choose to package and present information in particular ways, according to what needs to be presented as background, or as foreground or what needs to be emphasized. Canonical clauses, by our definition of them, package the information in the syntactically most elementary and basic way. In [Chapter 16](#) we review a number of constructions which differ from canonical clauses on this dimension. Three brief examples:

- **Passive** clauses like *My child was bitten by your dog*, which has the active counterpart *Your dog bit my child*, are non-canonical in virtue of being slightly more complex (note the extra words *was* and *by*), and in relating to the discourse context in some peculiar ways discussed in [§16.2](#).
- **Extraposition**, as in *It was sad that he fell asleep* is a non-canonical clause construction. The canonical version, *That he fell asleep was sad*, has the subordinate clause *that he fell asleep* as its subject, as in the structure of clauses with NPs as subjects, like *His lapse of consciousness was unfortunate*. The extraposition version has a meaningless pronoun *it* in subject function, and the subordinate clause – though understood as if it was the subject – is positioned at the end of the clause. That can't happen when the subject is an NP: there's no extraposed version **It was unfortunate his lapse of consciousness*. (It's different if you add a comma before *his*, but that makes a very different sentence: it has an NP added on the end as a supplement, explaining what the *it* meant; see [§8.11](#).)
- **Preposing** of complements, as in *The others, I think I gave away* (compare *I think I gave the others away*), makes a clause non-canonical by introducing a radical difference in order of constituents.

Appendix: Notational Conventions

We can now summarize the conventions for notation and exemplification that we will use throughout this book – and in fact have already been using.

CONVENTION	EXEMPLIFICATION OF USE
Words, phrases, clauses, or sentences used for illustrating English data are always set in italics.	The sentence <i>Have a nice day</i> has the form of an imperative but does not express a command.
Technical terms when first introduced are set in boldface.	A verb form inflected to show past tense is called a preterite form.
Names of lexemes are set in bold italics.	The verb <i>give</i> has an irregular preterite form.
Parts of examples picked out for special attention may be shown by underlining.	The verb phrases <u><i>lend him money</i></u> and <u><i>lent him money</i></u> contrast in tense.
Emphasized parts of our expository text, and some column headers, are set in small capitals.	It is important that <small>A PRETERITE FORM DOESN'T ALWAYS REFER TO PAST TIME.</small>
Square brackets may be used in examples to mark off specific phrases when they are relevant to the discussion.	The preposition phrases <i>after</i> [<i>our meeting</i>] and <i>after</i> [<i>we met</i>] have complements of different categories.
Quotations and mentioned words or phrases that we are not considering as data are shown in SINGLE quotation marks.	When a traditional grammar says ‘the possessive form ’ it refers to what we call the genitive form.
Paraphrases of meanings are shown in double quotation marks.	The phrase <i>kick the bucket</i> has the idiomatic sense “died”.
An initial asterisk * means “ungrammatical in Standard English”; [‰] means “used by only some SE speakers”; [!] means “grammatical only in a non-standard dialect”; [?] means “is of questionable acceptability”; ^{??} means “is of highly questionable acceptability”; [#] means “is semantically incoherent”.	[*] <i>I the happy</i> is ungrammatical. [‰] <i>Have you a pen?</i> is BrE usage. [!] <i>It ain’t bad</i> is non-standard. [?] <i>I’ve given it it.</i> ^{??} <i>They became in love.</i> [#] <i>Use a raw cooked onion.</i>
Displays of example sentences or other expressions are have numbers in square brackets: [1], [2], etc.	Example [37] contrasts with [38]: [38] <i>I didn’t see anybody.</i>
Sub-examples have numbers in lower-case roman numerals: i, ii, etc.	[39] i <i>I didn’t see anybody.</i> ii <i>I saw nobody.</i>
Subcases of sub-examples are identified by lower-case letters.	[40] i a. <i>anybody</i> b. <i>anyone</i> ii a. <i>nobody</i> b. <i>no one</i>
We use the centred dot · to show where a prefix or suffix attaches to its base.	The suffix <i>·n’t</i> marks an auxiliary verb as negative.

Exercises on Chapter 2

.....

1. Divide the MAIN CLAUSES of the following examples into subject and predicate. Underline the subject and double-underline the predicate. For example: This is the house that Jack built.
 - i *I think it's a disgrace.*
 - ii *The guy in that house over there works for the city.*
 - iii *Most of the mistakes he made were very minor.*
 - iv *The thing that puzzles me is why no one called the police.*
 - v *One of her daughters is training to be a pilot.*
 - vi *Paul's aunts had driven up in a U-haul.*
 - vii *Unfortunately, there was nothing he could do about it.*
 - viii *Even when she suspected the house was empty, she would knock.*
 - ix *It's a genre of hip-hop.*
 - x *Malcolm, you should spend the day in Saint-Denis.*

2. The underlined expressions in the following examples are all NPs. State the function of each one (either subject or direct object or predicative complement).
 - i *I've just seen your father.*
 - ii *The old lady lived alone.*
 - iii *Sue wrote that editorial.*
 - iv *She's the editor of the local paper.*
 - v *It sounds a promising idea to me.*
 - vi *Yuri didn't feel any pressure from the president.*
 - vii *Isn't someone championing this more?*
 - viii *With two years of experience, Pounds had multiple offers from which to choose.*
 - ix *Mr. Barakat's work supplying dental care to needy people in the Middle East has become one powerful antidote.*
 - x *'Wall-to-wall clutter becomes you,' Yumi said to Jacobus.*

3. Assign each word in the following examples to one of the lexical categories: noun (N), verb (V), adjective (Adj), determinative (D), adverb (Adv), preposition (Prep), subordinator (Sub), coordinator (Co), or interjection (Int).
 - i *Oh, she often goes to Moscow.*
 - ii *The dog was barking.*
 - iii *Sue and Ed walked to the park.*
 - iv *I met some friends of the new boss.*
 - v *We know that these things are extremely expensive.*
 - vi *It doesn't matter that you did it.*
 - vii *If you would like to leave us a voicemail, too bad.*
 - viii *Having an Etsy shop makes me feel like that again.*
 - ix *I agree with that.*
 - x *They provide some analytics, but only to account holders.*

4. [Supplementary exercise] Construct a plausible-sounding, grammatical sentence that uses at least one word from each of the nine categories listed in the previous exercise (see [2] in section 2.1.1 of this chapter). [Note: this is fairly difficult, but it can be done, and as soon as you've seen one it becomes easy to make others. We'll occasionally provide challenge exercises like this, which are an opportunity for you to stretch yourself. Don't feel that you need to complete every one.]
5. Identify the head in each phrase.
 - i *by using one of the premium scripts that are easily available online* (PP)
 - ii *either way* (NP)
 - iii *with so much at stake* (PP)
 - iv *hear about the project again* (VP)
 - v *just* (AdvP)
 - vi *may have already stopped rising* (VP)
 - vii *very many* (DP)
 - viii *seems highly unlikely that this is working as intended* (VP)
 - ix *so glad that you wrote this* (AdjP)
 - x *the Toronto waterfront trail* (NP)
6. Identify the underlined verbs as **auxiliary** or **lexical**.
 - i *Repeating it was going to be a waste of time.*
 - ii *He asked Ezra to dim the lights.*
 - iii *'It ain't all about YouTube videos.*
 - iv *The crew tries to fight the monster.*
 - v *They must not be too baggy.*
 - vi *When my kids were little I got hampers and removed the lids.*
 - vii *Why can't I get to the Settings app that everybody keeps talking about?*
 - viii *We've been having difficulty in controlling the ever-growing wolf population.*
 - ix *Your bread probably did rise faster there.*
 - x *Your repetition of the assertion does not make it true.*
7. Classify the main clauses below as **canonical** or **non-canonical** clauses. For the non-canonical ones, say which non-canonical clause category or categories they belong to (see §2.4).
 - i *Most of us enjoyed it very much.*
 - ii *Have you seen Tom recently?*
 - iii *He tends to exaggerate.*
 - iv *Who said she was unhappy?*
 - v *I've never seen anything like it.*
 - vi *They invited me but I couldn't go.*
 - vii *This house was built by my grandfather.*

- viii *It's a pity you live so far away.*
 - ix *I'm sure she likes you.*
 - x *Tell me what you want.*
8. Identify the functions of the following AdjPs as predicative complement or modifier (see §2.6.1).
- i *Clerks get specific training in responsible liquor sales.*
 - ii *Dizziness is the most common symptom noted.*
 - iii *For me, it's my top choice.*
 - iv *I won't get specific, but she likes some intense things.*
 - v *Icelanders respected indigenous narrative traditions.*
 - vi *My hunting licence is good everywhere in this state.*
 - vii *So what causes ice to look blue?*
 - viii *The only place to find a significant supply of oil is at Sleepy Bay.*
 - ix *The simple things probably sound a bit silly.*
 - x *They could have gotten that same cheap thrill from any other box.*
9. Identify the underlined words as adjectives, determinatives, or pronouns.
- i *a specific set of cards*
 - ii *some paradigm-smashing*
 - iii *the exact same predicament*
 - iv *the results of these pair-wise contests*
 - v *their own clothing line*
 - vi *this need of ours*
 - vii *this sense of the country losing its norms*
 - viii *unless anyone has one of those*
 - ix *for every 500 posts*
 - x *certain times*
10. Given what you know of our view of categories and functions, which of the following sentences are true in our view of the grammar?
- i A noun can function as an adjective in an NP.
 - ii A predicate always needs a subject.
 - iii A clause is a kind of phrase.
 - iv An AdjP can be headed by a verb.
 - v Coordinators never function as the head of a phrase.
 - vi Every phrase has a head.
 - vii NPs can function as subjects, objects, and predicative complements.
 - viii i Only an AdjP can function as a predicative complement.
 - ix The head of an AdjP is an adjective.
 - x The subject always has the form of an NP.

3

Verbs and Verb Phrases

3.1 Verb Inflection

Verbs are **variable lexemes**. That is, they have a number of different inflectional forms that are required or permitted in various grammatical contexts. For example, the verb lexeme *fly* has a form *flown* that is required in a context like [1a], where it follows the verb *have*, and a form *flew* that is permitted in a context like [1b], where it is the only verb in a canonical clause:

- [1] i a. *Aliyah has flown home.*
b. *Aliyah flew home.*
- ii a. **Aliyah has flies home.*
b. *Aliyah flies home.*

Notice that we said that *flown* is REQUIRED in contexts like [1a], but that *flew* is PERMITTED in contexts like [b]. This is because in [b] we could have *flies* instead of *flew*. And of course there's a difference in meaning too: *Aliyah flew home* locates the flying in past time, while *Aliyah flies home* is not specific about time (it would normally be taken as saying something about Aliyah's habitual way of getting home).

We can see here that there are two kinds of inflection: cases where an inflectional contrast conveys a meaning distinction (*flies* versus *flew*), and cases (like the *flown* of [1a]) where the occurrence of a particular inflectional form is required by a grammatical rule.

3.1.1 The Verb Paradigm

The set of inflectional forms of a variable lexeme (together with their grammatical labels) is called its **paradigm**. In some languages the verb paradigms are extremely complex, but in English they are fairly simple. The great majority of verbs in English have paradigms consisting of six inflectional forms. We illustrate in [2] with the paradigm for the verb *walk*, with example sentences exemplifying how the forms are used:

[2]

	PARADIGM		EXAMPLE SENTENCE
PRIMARY FORMS	PRETERITE	<i>walked</i>	<i>She <u>walked</u> home.</i>
	3RD SINGULAR PRESENT	<i>walks</i>	<i>She <u>walks</u> home.</i>
	PLAIN PRESENT	<i>walk</i>	<i>They <u>walk</u> home.</i>
SECONDARY FORMS	PLAIN FORM	<i>walk</i>	<i>She should <u>walk</u> home.</i>
	GERUND-PARTICIPLE	<i>walking</i>	<i>She is <u>walking</u> home.</i>
	PAST PARTICIPLE	<i>walked</i>	<i>She has <u>walked</u> home.</i>

Inflectional Form versus Written Shape

We explain below the various grammatical terms used to classify and label the inflectional forms. But first we need to explain why *walked* and *walk* each appear twice in the paradigm. This means drawing a distinction between an **inflectional form** in a paradigm and its actual sound (in speech) or spelling (in writing), which we will sometimes call its **shape**. The preterite and the past participle are different inflectional forms, but they have the same shape. In writing, the shape is *walked*. A similar situation holds for the plain present and the plain form: they share the shape *walk*.

In the case of the preterite and the past participle there is a very obvious reason for recognizing distinct inflectional forms even though the shape is the same: many common verbs have different shapes for these inflectional forms. One is *fly*, as shown in [1]: its preterite form has the shape *flew*, while its past participle has the shape *flown*.

The reason for distinguishing the plain present from the plain form (which is somewhat less obvious, but still necessary) is explained in §3.1.2 below.

Primary versus Secondary Forms

In general, **primary** forms show inflectional distinctions of tense (preterite vs present) and can occur as the sole verb in a canonical clause (a minor exception to this is discussed in §3.7.4); **secondary** forms have no tense inflection and can't occur as the head of a canonical clause. For now, you can think of primary forms as **TENSED**, and secondary forms as **NON-TENSED**.

Preterite

The term **preterite** is used for an **INFLECTIONAL past tense** – a past tense that is signalled by a specific inflectional form of the verb rather than a separate auxiliary verb. (Again, crucially, we mean inflectional form, not shape; there are a couple of dozen verbs like *cut*, *hit*, and *put* that happen to use the same shape for the preterite as for the plain present. Nonetheless, *She hit me* contains the preterite form of *hit*, not the present.)

By a **past tense** we mean one whose most central use is to indicate past time. The preterite of *take* is *took*, and when I say *I took them to school* I refer to some time in the past. The relation between tense and time in English, however, is by no means straightforward (recall §1.2.1), and it is important that preterite tense does not always signal past time. Take this sentence: *It would be better if I took them to school next week*. This has the same preterite form *took*, but here the time is future. Although making a reference to past time is the CENTRAL use of the preterite (which is why we call it a past tense), a preterite doesn't ALWAYS signal past time (for more discussion, see §3.4.2 below).

Present Tense

The central use of **present tense** forms is to signal present time reference. For example, *This feels warm* describes a state of affairs that prevails right now, at the moment of speaking. This explains why the present tense forms are so called; but here too it must be emphasized that they are not invariably used for referring to present time. In a stage direction or film script, *The door opens* refers to the present time in the story: 'She pushes the door; the door opens' would describe a situation where the door opens at the very moment we have reached in the script's story. However, in *The exhibition opens next week*, we have the same form of the same verb, but here the exhibition is being claimed to open at some time in the future.

Third Person Singular Present versus Plain Present

Almost all verbs have two present tense forms, such as *walks* and *walk* in [2]. The choice between them depends on the subject of the clause: the verb **agrees** with the subject. The 3rd person singular form occurs with a 3rd person singular subject (e.g., *She walks home*), and the plain present tense form occurs with any other kind of subject (e.g., *They walk home*).

The agreement involves the categories of **person** and **number**. These apply in the first place to NPs, and hence are discussed more fully in Chapter 5 (§§5.2, 5.8.2). Number contrasts singular and plural. Person contrasts 1st person (*I* and *we*), 2nd person (*you*), and 3rd person (all other constituents whether they are NPs or not). So the 3rd person singular present tense form occurs with 3rd person singular subjects, and the plain present tense form occurs with any other subject – it doesn't matter whether it's plural (*My parents walk home*), 1st person (*I walk home*), or 2nd person (*You walk home*).

We call *walk* in these cases the 'plain' present tense (rather than use a clumsy negative phrase like 'non-3rd-person singular present') because it is identical with the **lexical base** of the lexeme. The lexical base is the starting point for the rules of morphology which describe how the shapes of the inflectional forms are derived. The 3rd person singular present tense *walks* is formed from the lexical base by

adding *·s*, just as the gerund-participle is formed by adding *·ing*. The plain present tense has the same shape as the lexical base.

The Plain Form

The **plain form** is identical with the lexical base of the verb, but it is not a present tense form, so we call it simply **plain form**. This contrasts with **plain present**. The necessary distinction between these two inflectional forms is discussed in §3.1.2 below.

The plain form is used in three syntactically distinct clause constructions: **imperative**, **subjunctive**, and **infinitival**. Infinitival clauses have two subtypes, the *to*-infinitival and the bare infinitival. These constructions are illustrated in [3] with the plain form of *keep*:

[3]	i	IMPERATIVE	<i>Keep us informed.</i>						
	ii	SUBJUNCTIVE	<i>It's vital [that he keep us informed].</i>						
	iii	INFINITIVAL	<table> <tr> <td>a.</td> <td>TO-INFINITIVAL</td> <td><i>It's vital [(for him) to keep us informed].</i></td> </tr> <tr> <td>b.</td> <td>BARE INFINITIVAL</td> <td><i>He should [keep us informed].</i></td> </tr> </table>	a.	TO-INFINITIVAL	<i>It's vital [(for him) to keep us informed].</i>	b.	BARE INFINITIVAL	<i>He should [keep us informed].</i>
a.	TO-INFINITIVAL	<i>It's vital [(for him) to keep us informed].</i>							
b.	BARE INFINITIVAL	<i>He should [keep us informed].</i>							

- Imperatives are typically used as directives – the term we have given for various ways of getting people to do things, such as requests, orders, instructions, and so on. Most imperatives have no subject, as in [i]; in such cases the predicate is understood to apply to the addressee – *Keep me informed* tells you, the addressee, to keep the speaker informed.
- Subjunctives are most commonly found as subordinate clauses of the kind shown in [ii]. Structurally, these differ only in the verb inflection from subordinate clauses with a primary verb form – and many speakers would here use the present tense (*It's vital that he keeps us informed*) in preference to the slightly more formal subjunctive. Subjunctives occur as main clauses only in a few more or less fixed expressions (mostly survivals from earlier centuries), like *God bless you*; *Long live the emperor*; *Heaven help us*; *So be it*; *Woe betide anyone who disobeys*, etc.
- *To*-infinitivals begin with the special marker *to*. The subject is optional and usually omitted. If present, it must be preceded by *for*, and if it's a personal pronoun like *I*, *he*, *she*, *we*, or *they*, the pronoun appears in a different inflectional form from the normal one for subjects in canonical clauses: notice *him* in [iii], contrasting with *he* in [ii]. (It simply isn't true to say, as traditional grammars nearly always do, that *he* is used for a subject, and *him* for a non-subject. The generalization is considerably more fiddly than that.)
- Bare infinitivals lack the *to*, and almost always have no subject. They occur after various auxiliary verbs such as *can*, *may*, *will*, etc.

to an adjective, such as *unpopular* in *A route [unpopular with tourists] is bound to be expensive*.

The ‘past’ component of the name, on the other hand, derives from its use in the perfect construction. The perfect is a kind of past tense (one indicated by an auxiliary verb rather than by inflection, like the preterite), and in [5i], for example, the flying is located in past time. But there is no past time meaning associated with *flown* in passive clauses like those in [5ii].

3.1.2 Verb Forms and Shape Sharing

We have seen that different inflectional forms of a verb may share the same shape. In our example paradigm for *walk* given in [2], this applies to the preterite and the past participle (both *walked*) and to the plain present and the plain form (both *walk*). In this section we look further at these two major cases of shape sharing, and then mention briefly two further cases found only with a handful of verbs. (We provide a systematic description of English inflectional morphology in an online appendix via the Cambridge University Press website at www.cambridge.org/SIEG2.)

Shape Sharing between Preterite and Past Participle

Walk is an example of a **regular** verb, which means it has INFLECTIONAL FORMS ALL PREDICTABLE BY GENERAL RULE. An **irregular** verb, by contrast, is one where the grammar needs to specify the unexpected shape of at least one inflectional form for that particular verb. We need to say explicitly, for example, that *show* has an irregular past participle with the shape *shown* (not *showed*). And for *fly*, both the preterite (*flew*) and the past participle (*flown*) are irregular (neither has the otherwise expected shape **fled*).

In the paradigm of each regular verb, the preterite and past participle share an identical shape, and indeed this is also the case with most of the 220 or so irregular verbs. Nevertheless, there are a good number like *fly* which have distinct shapes.

We can set out the paradigms for *walk* and *fly* in chart form, with lines indicating distinctions in shape (the order of presenting the forms is chosen purely to make it easy to represent where shape-sharing occurs):

[6]

The regular verb <i>walk</i>		The irregular verb <i>fly</i>	
PRIMARY	SECONDARY	PRIMARY	SECONDARY
3rd sing present <i>walks</i>	gerund-participle <i>walking</i>	3rd sing present <i>flies</i>	gerund-participle <i>flying</i>
plain present	plain form	plain present	plain form
<i>walk</i>		<i>fly</i>	
<i>walked</i>		<i>flew</i>	<i>flown</i>
preterite	past participle	preterite	past participle

When preterite and past participle share the same shape, we can tell which one we have in any given sentence by a **substitution test**: WE SELECT A VERB IN WHICH PRETERITE AND PAST PARTICIPLE ARE DISTINCT AND SUBSTITUTE IT IN THE EXAMPLE TO SEE WHICH SHAPE IS REQUIRED. The following examples will illustrate the idea:

- | | | | |
|-----|--|---|---------------------|
| [7] | EXAMPLES WITH <i>walk</i> | <i>fly</i> SUBSTITUTED FOR <i>walk</i> | |
| | i a. <i>She usually <u>walked</u> there.</i> | b. <i>She usually <u>flew</u> there.</i> | } [preterite] |
| | ii a. <i>If only we <u>walked</u> more.</i> | b. <i>If only we <u>flew</u> more.</i> | |
| [8] | i a. <i>She has <u>walked</u> a lot.</i> | b. <i>She has <u>flown</u> a lot.</i> | } [past participle] |
| | ii a. <i>We were <u>walked</u> out.</i> | b. <i>We were <u>flown</u> to New York.</i> | |

We can see that the *walked* of [7] is a preterite form, because the experiment of substituting *fly* in these constructions requires *flew*. *Flown* would be quite impossible here (compare **She usually flown there* and **If only we flown more*). Notice that in [ii] we have again chosen a construction where the preterite does not indicate past time. You can't decide whether a form is preterite or not by asking whether it refers to past time: the matter has to be determined grammatically, not semantically.

Similarly, we can see that the *walked* of [8] is a past participle, since in these constructions (the perfect in [i] and the passive in [ii]) the form *flown* is required. The [b] examples would be ungrammatical with *flew* (**She has flew a lot*, **We were flew to New York*).

Shape Sharing between Plain Present and Plain Form

Almost all verbs have a present tense form that is identical in shape with the plain form. The only verb with a plain form distinct from all its present tense forms is *be*: it has three present tense forms (*am*, *is*, and *are*), all different in shape from its plain form, *be*. We can therefore use a substitution test involving *be* to distinguish plain present forms and plain forms of other verbs. Consider, for example, the following forms of the verb *write*:

- | | | | |
|-----|---|---|-------------------|
| [9] | EXAMPLES WITH <i>write</i> | <i>be kind</i> SUBSTITUTED FOR <i>write</i> | |
| | i a. <i>They <u>write</u> to her.</i> | b. <i>They <u>are</u> kind to her.</i> | } [present tense] |
| | ii a. <i><u>Write</u> to her.</i> | b. <i><u>Be</u> kind to her.</i> | |
| | iii a. <i>It's vital that he <u>write</u> to her.</i> | b. <i>It's vital that he <u>be</u> kind to her.</i> | } [plain form] |
| | iv a. <i>It's better to <u>write</u> to her.</i> | b. <i>It's better to <u>be</u> kind to her.</i> | |
| | v a. <i>He must <u>write</u> to her.</i> | b. <i>He must <u>be</u> kind to her.</i> | |

The underlined verbs in [i] are present tense forms, while those in [ii–v] are plain forms. It is this contrast between *are* in [ib] and *be* in the other [b] examples that provides the main justification for saying that there are two inflectional forms with the shape *write*, not just one.

Even with *be*, though, we have the same form in all of [9ii–v] (that is, in the imperative, the subjunctive, the *to*-infinitival, and the bare infinitival). The difference between these constructions is purely syntactic: they’re different kinds of clause, but they all require the same inflectional form of the verb.

The present tense forms in [9i] contrast in the tense system with preterite forms, and show agreement with the subject, as we see in [10]:

- [10] i a. *They wrote to her.* b. *They were kind to her.* [preterite]
- ii a. *He writes to her.* b. *He is kind to her.* [3rd sing present]

No such contrasts apply to the plain form verbs in [9ii–v]. For example, the construction in [9iv] doesn’t allow either the preterite or the 3rd singular present:

- [11] i a. **It’s better to wrote to her.* b. **It’s better to was kind to her.*
- ii a. **It’s better to writes to her.* b. **It’s better to is kind to her.*

You can see that the plain present tense and the plain form show quite different sets of contrasts in the verb paradigm. That is the basis for the different names we’ve given to the forms: the *write* of [9ia] is a present tense form, but that of [9iia–va] isn’t.

Minor Cases of Shape Sharing

There are two other cases of shape sharing, involving just a small number of verbs. With *come* and *run* (and verbs formed from them, such as *become*, *overrun*, etc.), not only the plain present tense but also the past participle has the same shape as the plain form, and with around twenty verbs like *cut*, *hit*, *let*, *put*, *shut*, etc., the plain form is shared with three other forms: the plain present, the preterite, and the past participle. Illustrative paradigms are given in (12):

[12]

The irregular verb <i>come</i>		The irregular verb <i>shut</i>	
PRIMARY	SECONDARY	PRIMARY	SECONDARY
3rd sing present	gerund-participle	3rd sing present	gerund-participle
<i>comes</i>	<i>coming</i>	<i>shuts</i>	<i>shutting</i>
plain present	plain form	plain present	plain form
<i>come</i>		<i>shut</i>	
<i>came</i>			
preterite	past participle	preterite	past participle

The four forms of *shut* that share the shape *shut* are illustrated in [13].

- | | | | |
|------|-----|--|-------------------|
| [13] | i | <i>These days we never <u>shut</u> this gate.</i> | [plain present] |
| | ii | <i>We forgot to <u>shut</u> this gate last night.</i> | [plain form] |
| | iii | <i>We definitely <u>shut</u> this gate last night.</i> | [preterite] |
| | iv | <i>We had <u>shut</u> this gate earlier.</i> | [past participle] |

3.2 Auxiliary Verbs

We turn now to an important division within the category of verbs: we need to separate roughly a dozen **auxiliary verbs** from all of the rest, which we call the **lexical verbs**. The auxiliary verbs (or more briefly, **auxiliaries**) differ sharply in grammatical behaviour from lexical verbs and figure crucially in a number of common constructions.

Within the auxiliaries, there are also major differences between the special subclass known as **modal auxiliaries** and the rest of the class, which we will call **non-modal**; the significance of the term ‘modal’ will be explained in §3.7, when we consider the meanings expressed by these verbs. The classification in [14] is exhaustive for the auxiliaries (though not, of course, for the lexical verbs, since there are thousands of them):

[14]	LEXICAL VERBS	AUXILIARY VERBS	
		NON-MODAL	MODAL
	<i>allow, bring, come, drink, eat, find, go, hold, invite, join, know, learn, meet, navigate, own, persuade, quell, rip, stand, televise, undertake, vilify, ...</i>	<i>be, do, have</i>	<i>can, may, must, shall, will, ought, need, dare</i>

The forms *could*, *might*, *would*, *should* are the preterite forms of the modal auxiliaries *can*, *may*, *will*, and *shall*, respectively. They differ very considerably in their uses from ordinary preterites, though; at first it may not seem clear that they are preterites at all (but see §3.7.2 on this).

We begin by looking at some of the most important grammatical properties distinguishing auxiliaries from lexical verbs. We then turn in §3.2.2 to the distinctive properties of the modal auxiliaries. There is some overlap between auxiliary and lexical verbs; in §3.2.3, we examine four such cases: *need*, *dare*, *have*, and *do*. Finally, §3.2.4 suggests a general definition of auxiliary verb.

3.2.1 Distinctive Properties of English Auxiliary Verbs

Auxiliary verbs behave differently from lexical verbs in a number of ways. The two most important ways involve **subject–auxiliary inversion** and **negation**.

Subject–Auxiliary Inversion

Interrogative main clauses very often differ from declaratives in the position of the subject. Instead of preceding the verb, it follows: compare declarative *It is ready* (subject + verb) and interrogative *Is it ready?* (verb + subject). The former is the basic, or **canonical**, order and we describe the latter in terms of inversion. More specifically, it is a matter of **subject–auxiliary inversion** since it is ONLY AUXILIARY VERBS that can invert with the subject in interrogative clauses. Compare:

- | | | | | | |
|------|----|----------------|--|--------------|--|
| [15] | | AUXILIARY VERB | | LEXICAL VERB | |
| | i | a. | <i>She <u>has</u> taken the money.</i> | b. | <i>She <u>takes</u> the money.</i> [basic order] |
| | ii | a. | <i><u>Has</u> she taken the money?</i> | b. | <i>*<u>Takes</u> she the money?</i> [inverted] |

Has in declarative [ia] is an auxiliary verb and can therefore invert with the subject to form the closed interrogative [iia], but *takes* in [ib] is a lexical verb, so the inverted version [iib] is ungrammatical. To form the closed interrogative counterpart of [ib] we need to add the auxiliary verb *do*: *Does she take the money?* THIS *do* HAS NO MEANING OF ITS OWN – it simply permits compliance with the grammatical requirement that this kind of interrogative clause should contain an auxiliary verb. We refer to it therefore as the **dummy auxiliary do**.

This dummy auxiliary *do* CANNOT BE USED IN COMBINATION WITH ANOTHER AUXILIARY VERB, so [16b] below is ungrammatical. *Do* in [16a] is the 3rd person present tense form; *take* is the plain form.

- | | | | | |
|------|----|--|----|---|
| [16] | | DUMMY <i>do</i> + LEXICAL VERB | | DUMMY <i>do</i> + AUXILIARY VERB |
| | a. | <i>Does she <u>take</u> the money?</i> | b. | <i>*Does she <u>have</u> taken the money?</i> |

Negation

There are two ways in which auxiliaries differ from lexical verbs with respect to negation. In the first place, the simplest type of negative clause construction, where the negation is associated with a primary verb form, is permitted with auxiliary verbs but not with lexical verbs:

- | | | | | | |
|------|----|-----------|--|--------------|--|
| [17] | | AUXILIARY | | LEXICAL VERB | |
| | i | a. | <i>She <u>has</u> taken the money.</i> | b. | <i>She <u>takes</u> the money.</i> [positive] |
| | ii | a. | <i>She <u>has not</u> taken the money.</i> | b. | <i>*She <u>takes not</u> the money.</i> [negative] |

To form the negative of *She takes the money* we have to add dummy *do*, just as we did to form the interrogative, and again this *do* cannot combine with another auxiliary verb:

- | | | | | |
|------|----|--|----|---|
| [18] | | DUMMY <i>do</i> + LEXICAL VERB | | DUMMY <i>do</i> + AUXILIARY VERB |
| | a. | <i>She <u>does not take</u> the money.</i> | b. | <i>*She <u>does not have</u> taken the money.</i> |

Some verbs with clausal complements can be followed by *not* as a modifier in the following clause (e.g., *I try not to be late*), but there is a second negation test for auxiliary verbs: auxiliaries have ADDITIONAL PRIMARY INFLECTIONAL FORMS EXPRESSING NEGATION:

- [19] i PRETERITE *He couldn't swim. She wouldn't help us. They hadn't finished.*
 ii PRESENT *He can't swim. She won't help us. They haven't finished.*

Absolutely no lexical verbs have forms of this kind: **tookn't*, **taken't*, etc., are completely impossible. Historically, the negative forms of auxiliaries arose through contraction, with *could* + *not* being reduced to *couldn't*, and so on. But in the English of today they are inflectional forms. There are at least four arguments for this:

- No general rule of pronunciation would yield *won't* from contracting *will* + *not*, or *can't* from *can* + *not*, or *shan't* from *shall* + *not*. These are irregular verb inflections. (In addition, *cannot* is found as a more formal alternate of *can't*, so there are two present-tense negative inflected forms.)
- Although every auxiliary has a negative form, not every form has a corresponding negative: there are holes in the pattern. The form **amn't* doesn't occur in Standard English (it's found only in some Scottish and Northern Ireland dialects), though of course *am not* can occur; **mayn't* dropped out of use about a hundred years ago; *°shan't* has almost completely disappeared as well; and forms like *mightn't*, *needn't*, and *daren't* are becoming rare (especially in AmE). These irregularities show that *·n't* cannot be a pronunciation of the word *not* in contemporary English (though that's its historical origin).
- In subject–auxiliary inversion constructions, the *·n't* forms occur where auxiliary + *not* is impossible. For example, compare *Isn't it ready?* with **Is not it ready?*, or *Won't I need a ticket?* with **Will not I need a ticket?*
- There are semantic differences. *Can't* does not always have the same meaning as *can* with *not* following it: *The roof rack can not be attached* expresses an option: you can leave the roof rack off if you want; *The roof rack cannot be attached* (or *can't be attached*) expresses a complaint: it means that fitting it on is impossible.

3.2.2 Modal Auxiliaries

The modal auxiliaries (more briefly, **modals**) have two inflectional properties that distinguish them from all other verbs. They also share a purely syntactic property that distinguishes the prototypical ones from nearly all other verbs.

Lack of Secondary Inflectional Forms

Modals (and also auxiliary *do*) have ONLY PRIMARY FORMS, so they can't appear in constructions requiring a secondary form – a plain form, gerund-participle, or past participle. We can see this clearly when we contrast *must work* with *have to work*.

They have essentially the same meaning, but *must* is a modal auxiliary and this use of *have* is a lexical verb, so we get clear contrasts in grammaticality:

[20]	MODAL AUXILIARY	NON-MODAL AUXILIARY	
i	a. You <u>must</u> work hard.	b. You <u>have</u> to work hard.	[primary form]
ii	a. *You will <u>must</u> work hard.	b. You will <u>have</u> to work hard.	[plain form]
iii	a. *You are <u>musting</u> work hard.	b. You're <u>having</u> to work hard.	[gerund-participle]
iv	a. *You've <u>must</u> work hard.	b. You've <u>had</u> to work hard.	[past participle]

No Distinct Third Singular Agreement Form in the Present Tense

The modal auxiliaries show no agreement with the subject, having the same form for all subjects. There are no special 3rd singular forms (**cans*, **mays*, **musts*, **will*s, etc.). Again, *must* contrasts with *have*:

[21]	i	a. I <u>must</u> leave now.	b. I <u>have</u> to leave now.	[1st singular subj]
	ii	a. She <u>must</u> leave now.	b. She <u>has</u> to leave now.	[3rd singular subj]

Bare Infinitival Complement

The prototypical modal auxiliaries take a single complement with the form of a bare infinitival clause. Nearly all other verbs that select infinitival complements take the *to*-infinitival kind. Once again there's a contrast between *must* and *have*, seen in [20] and [21]. There are lexical verbs that are followed by bare infinitivals (one is *help*, as in *We helped clear up the mess*), but very few.

There is also one verb that qualifies as a modal auxiliary by the first two criteria but (for most speakers, anyway) needs an infinitival with *to*: the verb *ought*, as in *He ought to be more careful*.

3.2.3 Dually Classified Verbs

A handful of verbs belong to both auxiliary and lexical verb classes. They show auxiliary behaviour under some circumstances and lexical verb behaviour elsewhere. The most important ones are *do* and *have*.

Do

The *do* that we call a dummy, which for convenience we can call *do_{aux}*, is an auxiliary, but in other uses we find a lexical verb with the same shape (e.g., in *She did her best*, or *Make sure you do your homework*). This lexeme, which we can call *do_{lex}*, is a lexical verb. This is evident from the fact that to form the interrogative or negative in such cases we use *do_{aux}* along with it, just as with other lexical verbs:

- [22] WITHOUT DUMMY *do* WITH DUMMY *do*
 a. **Does_{lex} she her best?* b. *Does_{aux} she do_{lex} her best?*

Have

- *Have* is always an auxiliary when it indicates perfect tense (where it normally occurs with a following past participle).
- It also has a use expressing a state rather than a process or action: possession is one such state (*He has enough money*), and obligation is another (*You have to sign both forms*). This use shows lexical verb behaviour. (It used to show auxiliary behaviour, so in older BrE novels you may see ⁰*Has he sufficient support?* or ⁰*Have I to assume you are resigning?*, but very few living speakers still use *have* that way – it's been fading away for nearly a century.)
- There's also a dynamic use of *have*, occurring in clauses describing events: *He often has tantrums*; *They had us running all over town*; *She's having a baby*; *I had it wrapped up by lunchtime*. This use of *have* always shows lexical verb behaviour.

These facts are illustrated in [23].

- | | | | |
|------|---|--|------------|
| [23] | AUXILIARY USAGE | LEXICAL VERB USAGE | |
| i | a. <i>Have you told her?</i> | b. <i>*Do you have told her?</i> | [perfect] |
| ii | a. ⁰ <i>Has he enough money?</i> | b. <i>Does he have enough money?</i> | } [static] |
| iii | a. ⁰ <i>Have I to sign both forms?</i> | b. <i>Do I have to sign both forms?</i> | |
| iv | a. <i>*Has he these tantrums often?</i> | b. <i>Does he have these tantrums often?</i> | [dynamic] |

Dare and Need

Dare and *need* also show a complex mix of auxiliary and lexical verb behaviours, but auxiliary behaviour (as in ⁰*Dare I accept it?* or ⁰*Need we tell him?*) is increasingly rare in contemporary usage and rapidly disappearing from the language, especially in AmE (see CGEL §3.2.5.5 for details).

3.2.4 Auxiliary Verbs Cross-Linguistically

The grammatical properties outlined in §3.2.1 serve to distinguish auxiliary verbs from lexical verbs IN ENGLISH. There are many languages, however, that have verbs commonly referred to as auxiliaries, so we need to consider for a moment what is meant by 'auxiliary verb' as a term that could be applied generally across languages.

A definition of the concept of an auxiliary verb that could be applied across languages would say that auxiliary verbs form a small, grammatically distinct subclass of verbs whose members characteristically accompany another verb and

tend to convey meanings or mark grammatical systems which, in other languages (or even elsewhere in the same language), are expressed by inflection of the verb.

Most of the auxiliary verbs in English (the ones with the special properties relating to inversion and negation) carry information about tense, aspect, voice, or the modal system as shown in [24]:

[24]	AUXILIARY VERB	CARRIER OF	EXAMPLE
i	<i>have</i>	perfect tense	<i>Sue <u>has</u> written the preface.</i>
ii	<i>be</i>	progressive aspect	<i>Sue <u>is</u> writing the preface.</i>
iii	<i>be</i>	passive voice	<i>The preface <u>was</u> written by Sue.</i>
iv	<i>may, can, must, etc.</i>	modality	<i>Sue <u>may</u> write the preface.</i>

What is meant by the general terms **tense**, **aspect**, **voice**, and **modality** will be explained as we describe them in their application to English. The full set of verbs for [iv] was shown in [14].

As usual, a general definition of this kind doesn't give us a way to decide precisely which expressions in English it is supposed to cover. It might provide a basis for using the same term in a principled way across a range of languages, but to determine which verbs in English are auxiliaries we need to apply the grammatical criteria relating to subject–auxiliary inversion and negation.

This excludes verbs like *begin*, *continue*, *keep*, and *stop*, even though in constructions like *They kept interrupting her*, they do very much the same work as progressive *be* in *They were interrupting her*. Some traditional grammars actually call these verbs 'aspectual auxiliaries'; but they're not auxiliary verbs in the narrow sense we need for English, as the inversion and negation facts show. They're lexical verbs expressing similar meanings.

Conversely, *be* shows auxiliary verb behavior not just when it's marking the progressive or the passive, but also when it is the only verb in the clause, taking a complement with the form of an AdjP or an NP. Its behavior with respect to inversion and negation is the same in this construction as in those where it is marking the progressive or the passive. This is shown in [25], where this use of *be* is compared with the one marking progressive aspect:

[25]	<i>be</i> EXPRESSING ASPECT	<i>be</i> AS THE ONLY VERB
i	a. <i>He is acting strangely.</i>	b. <i>He is insane.</i>
ii	a. <i>Is he acting strangely?</i>	b. <i>Is he insane?</i>
iii	a. <i>He isn't acting strangely.</i>	b. <i>He isn't insane.</i>

In §§3.4–3.7 we examine the meaning and use of four systems associated with the verb that are marked by the formal devices described above – by inflection or by auxiliary verbs. There are two systems of tense to consider: a 'primary' one marked by the inflectional contrast between preterite and present tense, and a 'secondary' one marked by the perfect auxiliary *have*. The other two systems we'll be dealing

with are progressive aspect, marked by the progressive auxiliary *be*, and the modal system, marked by the modal auxiliaries. (This chapter won't cover the use of the passive auxiliary *be*, as in *The preface was written by Sue*, because the passive has special properties that make it best described in the chapter on information packaging; see §16.2.) The four systems are shown with examples in [26]:

[26]	SYSTEM	TERMS	MARKED BY	EXAMPLE
i	PRIMARY TENSE	preterite	preterite inflection	<i>went</i>
		present	present tense inflection	<i>goes</i>
ii	SECONDARY TENSE	perfect	<i>have</i> with past participle	<i>has gone</i>
		non-perfect	[no special marking]	<i>goes</i>
iii	ASPECT	progressive	<i>be</i> with gerund-participle	<i>is going</i>
		non-progressive	[no special marking]	<i>goes</i>
iv	MODAL SYSTEM	modal	modal + plain-form verb	<i>can go</i>
		non-modal	[no special marking]	<i>goes</i>

3.3 Perfective and Imperfective Interpretations

Before we begin our survey of the four systems listed in [30] we need to introduce an important SEMANTIC distinction that is relevant to all of them: the distinction between **perfective** and **imperfective** interpretations. This will require us to discuss all the kinds of things that can be described by a clause: actions like snapping your fingers, processes like growing tall, stages of life like being young, epistemic states like believing you're right, mental states like feeling depressed, etc. There is no general term to use, so, following a common practice among linguists, we define **situation** as a technical term to cover actions, processes, states or whatever else can be described in a clause.

We can illustrate the difference between **perfective** and **imperfective** interpretations of situations with two examples describing a situation involving someone called Alex writing a novel:

[27]	PERFECTIVE	IMPERFECTIVE
a.	<i>Alex wrote a novel.</i>	b. <i>Alex was writing a novel.</i>

The [a] example simply describes something that happened in the past. Example [b], however, doesn't: it's not concerned with the total authorship experience, but with just part of it, some part in the middle during the process of composition. It doesn't follow from [b] that Alex ever actually completed the novel.

Alex wrote a novel is said to have a perfective interpretation in that it PRESENTS THE WRITING EVENT AS A WHOLE. *Alex was writing a novel* is imperfective because it doesn't do that but FOCUSES ON ONE PART of the writing, the part that was ongoing at the time in the past that is being referred to (e.g., *Alex was writing a novel when I last heard from her*).

Grammatically, [a] is **non-progressive**, while [b] is **progressive**, marked as such by the auxiliary *be* followed by the gerund-participle form. Semantically, PROGRESSIVE CLAUSES ARE ALMOST ALWAYS INTERPRETED IMPERFECTIVELY.

But imperfective interpretations are not confined to progressive clauses. Compare the following clauses (in [28iib] we mean the underlined one):

- | | | |
|------|---|--|
| [28] | PERFECTIVE | IMPERFECTIVE |
| | i a. <i>He lived at home until he was 31.</i> | b. <i>At that time, he still lived at home.</i> |
| | ii a. <i>His late grandfather was a Catholic.</i> | b. <i>Dee didn't call because <u>she was busy</u>.</i> |

These clauses describe situations that aren't events – his living at home in [i], his grandfather's Catholicism in [iia], Dee being involved in a busy life in [iib]. In the [a] examples, we are concerned with the whole period of time, but in the [b] examples we're focusing on some time within it. In [ib] the adjunct *at that time* defines a time at which he lived at home, and the adverb *still* tells us that he had also been living there before that time; the implication is that he continued to do so after the time in question. Similarly, in [iib] we're considering the time at which the issue of Dee calling came up: she was busy at that time (that's why she didn't call), but the state of being busy will have started earlier and continued later.

The [a] examples, then, are perfective, covering the situation in its totality, while the [b] examples are imperfective, not covering the situation as a whole but applying to some intermediate part of it.

3.3.1 Perfective versus Perfect

'Perfect' and 'perfective' are different terms for talking about different (but related) phenomena.

- **Perfect** is the name of A TERM IN A GRAMMATICAL SYSTEM, a type of past tense;
- **Perfective** applies (as far as English is concerned) to A KIND OF SEMANTIC INTERPRETATION – it's not a grammatical notion.

Both terms are derived from a Latin word meaning "complete". There are, however, two entirely different kinds of completeness involved. With the perfect tense, the key concept is that of past time. In examples like *She has written a novel*, the novel-writing is a completed event in the past. With the perfective interpretation, it is a matter of viewing the situation as a complete whole, but it needn't be in the past. In *She will write a novel*, for example, the novel-writing situation is still perfective, but it is in future time, not the past. So this clause is non-perfect in form but perfective in meaning. Conversely, *She has been writing a novel for over a year now* is perfect in form but imperfective in meaning. It is best to think of the two terms as quite independent, with the similarity between them being based on their historical origin rather than being indicative of any close correlation between them.

With the ideas of perfective and imperfective interpretation of situations in hand, we can now turn to an explanation of the four systems listed above, beginning with primary tense.

3.4 Primary Tense: The Present and Preterite

The primary tense system contrasts the **preterite**, an inflectionally marked past tense, with the **present tense**:

- | | | |
|------|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| [29] | PRETERITE | PRESENT TENSE |
| | a. <i>She <u>was</u> in Berlin.</i> | b. <i>She <u>is</u> in Berlin.</i> |

A tense system is a system associated with the verb where the basic contrasts in meaning have to do with the location in time of the situation, or the part of it under consideration. This clearly applies to the system illustrated in [29]. The clauses are interpreted imperfectively – considering only part of the situation – and the preterite in [a] indicates that the state in question prevailed at a time in the past, while the present tense in [b] indicates that it prevails in the present. Past and present time are concepts that relate to the time of utterance: usually past time is understood as time preceding the time of speaking and present time is time simultaneous with it.

The examples in [29] illustrate the most central use of the two primary tenses, but both tenses have a range of other uses too: the relation between tense and time in English is not at all straightforward. We'll show this for each of the two tenses in the primary system.

3.4.1 The Present Tense

Present Time

The most basic use of the present tense is to indicate present time – more specifically, time that coincides with the time of utterance, as in [29b].

But the time of utterance is of course very short. It often takes only a second or two to utter a sentence. So naturally there are severe restrictions on the use of the present tense in clauses with perfective interpretations. Compare these two examples:

- | | | |
|------|--|----------------|
| [30] | i <i>I <u>promise</u> to phone you tomorrow.</i> | [perfective] |
| | ii <i>Tricia <u>mows</u> the lawn.</i> | [imperfective] |

- The salient interpretation of [i] is perfective: there is a single act of promising which is performed simply by uttering the sentence. The act of promising and the uttering of the sentence occupy the same brief period of two or three seconds.

- But [ii] can't under any normal circumstances be interpreted in terms of a single act of mowing the lawn at the time of speaking. It takes much longer to mow a lawn than to utter a sentence, so the present time can't be the time of the situation considered as a whole. The natural interpretation is an imperfective one: we take the sentence to describe a situation where Tricia regularly or habitually does the lawn mowing. This situation holds at the time of speaking but began before then and may continue after it.

To talk about a single act of mowing the lawn while it is going on, we would normally use the progressive aspect version: *Tricia is mowing the lawn*. Here the progressive picks out a point within the total duration of the act, which is also an imperfective interpretation.

Future Time, I: The Futurate

The present tense is often used for situations located in future time. In main clauses, this future time use of the present tense is restricted to cases where it can be assumed that we have present knowledge of a future event, as in:

- [31] i *The next high tide is at 4 o'clock. The sun rises tomorrow at 6.10 a.m.*
 ii *The course starts next Thursday. We arrive home two days before Easter.*

This construction is called the **futurate**. The future time is usually specified by a time adjunct, marked here by double underlining. The two most common cases involve:

- recurrent events in nature whose time can be calculated scientifically (as in [i]);
- events that are arranged or scheduled in advance (as in [ii]).

Future Time, II: Subordinate Clauses

The present tense is used with future time reference without the above restrictions in certain types of subordinate clause. Three cases of this kind are illustrated in [32], where we put the subordinate clauses in brackets (traditional grammar would say that *if* in [i] and *before* in [ii] belong inside the brackets; we'll explain why that's wrong in §7.2.1):

- [32] i *Please, bring the washing in if [it rains].*
 ii *I'll give it to you before [I leave].*
 iii *I hope [you enjoy your stay].*

The underlined verbs are present tense but clearly make future time references.

- In [i], the subordinate clause is a complement inside a conditional modifier.
- In [ii], the subordinate clause is a complement inside a temporal modifier.
- In [iii], the subordinate clause is the complement of the VP headed by *hope*.

Past Time: The Historic Present

In certain types of narrative, especially in informal style, the present tense is used instead of the preterite for past time events, even in discourses that have begun in the preterite:

- [33] *I was waiting at the bus-stop in the rain when this guy drives up in a BMW and offers me a ride, so I say 'Well, I don't know', but he says 'Come on, you can trust me, I'm a grammarian', so I get in, and off we go ...*

3.4.2 The Preterite

Past Time

The central use of the preterite is to locate the situation, or the part of it under consideration, in past time. Compare the present tense examples in [30] with their preterite counterparts:

- [34] i *I promised to phone her.* [perfective]
 ii *Tricia mowed the lawn.* [imperfective or perfective]

Here again the salient interpretation of [i] is perfective, reporting a promise made in the past. Example [ii], however, can be readily interpreted either perfectly, as a completed act of mowing, or imperfectively, as the past time analog of [30ii], with Tricia habitually or regularly mowing the lawn in the past.

We noted above that perfective interpretations of present tense clauses with present time reference are restricted to situations of very short duration, since they have to be co-extensive with the act of utterance. No comparable constraint applies with the preterite, however, so [34ii], unlike [30ii], can be used perfectly to denote a single act of mowing the lawn located as a whole in past time.

Modal Remoteness: The Modal Preterite

There is a second important use of the preterite where the meaning has to do not with time but with **modality**. We call this the **modal preterite** use. Our main explanation of modality is in §3.7: at this point it's enough to say that it covers various cases where the situation described in a clause is not presented as a fact. The modal preterite is used to present the situation as, in varying degrees, modally **remote** from the actual world. This can best be understood by comparing the modal preterite with the present tense in such examples as those in [35], where in each pair the time is the same in [b] as in [a].

- | | PRESENT TENSE | MODAL PRETERITE |
|-----|---|---|
| i | a. <i>I'm glad she <u>lives</u> nearby.</i> | b. <i>I wish she <u>lived</u> nearby.</i> |
| ii | a. <i>I hope she <u>arrives</u> tomorrow.</i> | b. <i>I'd rather she <u>arrived</u> tomorrow.</i> |
| iii | a. <i>If he <u>loves</u> her, he'll change.</i> | b. <i>If he <u>loved</u> her, he'd change.</i> |
| iv | a. <i>If I <u>leave</u> now, I'll miss the traffic.</i> | b. <i>If I <u>left</u> now, I'd miss the traffic.</i> |

- Because of the contrasting meanings of *glad* and *wish*, we understand from [ia] that they do in fact live nearby, and from [ib] that they don't. In [ib] *they lived nearby* is interpreted COUNTERFACTUALLY, i.e., as definitely not corresponding to the way things are in the real world. This is the highest degree of modal remoteness. *Lived* in [ib] couldn't be replaced by present tense *lives*: a tensed complement in a *wish* VP has to have a modal preterite.
- A lesser degree of modal remoteness is seen in [ii]. In [iia], her hoped-for arrival tomorrow is expressed with the present tense, but [iib] has a modal preterite. It doesn't imply that she definitely won't arrive tomorrow, but it suggests that it may well be that she won't (perhaps I'm proposing a change to current arrangements where she's arriving at some other time). For some speakers the modal preterite is obligatory in a tensed complement after *would rather*, whereas for others a subjunctive clause would be a possible variant (*she arrive tomorrow* in the case of [35iib]; see the discussion of [3ii] in §3.1.1).
- In [iii–iv], we find something different again: here the grammar allows a choice between present tense and modal preterite, which contrast in meaning. These examples illustrate an important distinction between two kinds of conditional construction, **open**, as in [iiia/iva], vs **remote**, as in [iiib/ivb].
 - The open type characteristically leaves it open as to whether the condition is or will be fulfilled: he may love her, or he may not; I may leave now, or I may not.
 - The remote type, by contrast, generally presents the fulfilment of the condition as a more remote possibility. So [iiib] suggests a readiness to believe that he doesn't love her; this would be the version to use, for example, when arguing that because he's not planning to change therefore he doesn't love her. Similarly, [ivb] presents my leaving now as somewhat less likely than in the case of [iva]: it would generally be preferred, for example, in a context where your current plans or inclinations are to leave later.

Backshift

A third use of the preterite may be illustrated initially in indirect reported speech. Notice the contrast between *has* and *had* in this pair:

- [36] i *Dee has a great voice.* [original utterance: present tense]
 ii *I told Ira that Dee had a great voice.* [indirect report: backshifted preterite]

If I say [i] to Ira, I can use [ii] as an indirect report to tell you later what I said to Ira. I'm repeating the content of what I said, but not the exact wording. Indirect reported speech contrasts with **direct reported speech**, which does (or claims to) use the exact wording of the original: *I said to Ira, 'Dee has a great voice'.*

My utterance to Ira, [36i], contained the present tense form *has*, but my indirect report of it in [ii] contains preterite *had*. Nonetheless, my report is entirely accurate. This kind of change in tense is referred to as **backshift**.

In cases like this, backshift is optional: I could also report what I said as in [37], where the original present tense is retained:

[37] *I told Ira that Dee has a great voice.* [indirect report: non-backshifted present]

In other cases, backshift may be obligatory. Suppose I say *Dee has a headache* and report this the next day; I would use the backshifted form *I told Ira that Dee had a headache*: non-backshifted *has* would not be possible here. The difference is that having a great voice is an enduring state while a headache is normally of relatively short duration. In the great-voice case, I can assume that someone with a great voice when I originally spoke will still have one at the time of my report. But I can't assume that someone who had a headache yesterday will still have one today. The backshifted version is always possible: it looks at the situation described in the subordinate clause from the perspective of the original utterance. The non-backshifted version looks at it from the perspective of my report and is acceptable only if the change in perspective does not affect the temporal relations.

Although indirect reported speech represents the most obvious case, backshift also happens quite generally in constructions where one clause is embedded within a larger one containing a preterite verb:

- [38] i *Ira didn't know [that Dee had a great voice].*
 ii *I wondered at the time [whether they were genuine].*

The underlined verbs in the subordinate clause have backshifted tense – and note again that non-backshifted *has* is also possible in [i].

The backshifted preterites in the examples considered bear an obvious resemblance to preterites with the ordinary past time meaning. In [36ii], for instance, the main-clause verb *told* refers to a time in the past and the state described in the subordinate clause prevailed at that time. Nevertheless, we do need to recognize backshift as involving a distinct use of the preterite. This is evident from examples like these:

- [39] i *I thought the course started next week.*
 ii *I wish I knew if these paintings were genuine.*

As we noted in §1.2.1, a preterite form like *started* in [i] does not locate the starting in past time: the (potential) starting is in the future. The subordinate clause is the backshifted counterpart of the main clause *The course starts next week*, where present tense *starts* is what we are calling a futurate (see [31ii] above). The backshift is triggered by the preterite verb *thought*. In [39ii] we have a backshifted version of *These paintings are genuine*, and *were* likewise does not refer to past time: the issue

is whether the paintings are genuine now. In this case, the backshift is triggered by the preterite *knew*, which is an instance of the modal preterite: there is no reference to past time at all in this sentence.

3.5 Secondary Tense: The Perfect

There is a secondary way of constructing a tensed clause. The **perfect** is a past tense that is expressed with an additional auxiliary verb (the preterite, by contrast, is marked by inflection). The auxiliary for the perfect is *have*, which takes a past participle complement. Examples are given in [40] along with their non-perfect counterparts:

- | | | |
|------|--|---|
| [40] | PERFECT | NON-PERFECT |
| i | a. <i>She <u>has been</u> out of the office.</i> | b. <i>She <u>is</u> out of the office.</i> |
| ii | a. <i>She <u>had left</u> town.</i> | b. <i>She <u>left</u> town.</i> |
| iii | a. <i>She is said to <u>have spoken</u> Greek.</i> | b. <i>She's said to <u>speak</u> Greek.</i> |

In [ia] and [iia] the auxiliary *have* is itself inflected for primary tense, *has* being a present tense form, *had* a preterite. These constructions have what we call a **compound tense**: [ia] is present perfect and [iia] preterite perfect. In [iiia] *have* is in the plain form, so this time there is no primary tense in the subordinate clause and no compound tense: it's simply a case of secondary tense (the perfect) in a clause that does not have primary tense. But in all three cases the perfect encodes past time meaning.

The compound-tense present perfect is the most frequent of the constructions in [40], and we will begin with this even though the combination of present and past tenses makes it the most semantically complex of the three.

3.5.1 The Present Perfect

The present perfect, like the simple preterite (the non-perfect preterite) in its central use, locates the situation, or part of it, in past time. As a result, the interpretation is usually perfective: what's past is over and done with.

- | | | |
|------|--|--|
| [41] | PRESENT PERFECT | SIMPLE PRETERITE |
| | a. <i>She <u>has read</u> your letter.</i> | b. <i>She <u>read</u> your letter.</i> |

The difference in meaning results from the fact that the present perfect is a compound tense combining past and present, whereas the simple preterite is purely a past tense. The present perfect includes explicit reference to the present as well as the past, whereas the preterite does not. We can see the significance of the present tense component in two ways.

Time Adjuncts

Under certain conditions the present perfect allows time adjuncts referring to the present. The preterite does not. And conversely, the present perfect more or less excludes time adjuncts referring to the past, since they divorce the situation from present time. So we have these contrasts:

- [42] i a. *We have by now finished most of it.* b. **We by now finished most of it.*
 ii a. **She has finished her thesis last week.* b. *She finished her thesis last week.*

Current Relevance

With the present perfect, the past time situation is usually conceived of as having some kind of CURRENT RELEVANCE, relevance to the present, whereas the preterite does not express any such relationship. Compare:

- [43] i a. *She has lived in Paris for ten years.* b. *She lived in Paris for ten years.*
 ii a. *She has met the President.* b. *She met the President.*
 iii a. *The premier has resigned.* b. *The premier resigned.*
 iv a. *You've died your hair.* b. *You died your hair.*

- In [ia], under the most salient interpretation, the connection with the present is that she is still living in Paris. This is the imperfective interpretation. (A perfective interpretation is also available for [ia] if, for instance, it was the answer to the question, “how long has she lived in each city?”) In [ib], by contrast, the period of her living in Paris is located wholly in the past. In other words, it can ONLY be interpreted perfectly.
- In [iia], a natural interpretation would be that we are concerned with her PAST EXPERIENCE viewed perfectly as it affects her status now: some past experience of hers at some indefinite time puts her in the present state of being among the relatively small class of people who have met the President. If I use [iib], on the other hand, I'm simply reporting a past event, and it will typically be clear from the context what time period I am talking about.
- In [iiia] we see an example of the present perfect as used to report HOT NEWS. Examples like [iiia] are very common in radio and TV news broadcasts (and, of course, vanishingly rare in history books).
- Example [iva] illustrates the common use of the present perfect where the concern is with PRESENT RESULTS of past events. The salient context is one where your hair is a different colour than it was before. In [ivb] there is no such connection with the present: it simply describes a past event, and it could well be that you've shaved your dyed hair off. Either way, the interpretation is likely to be perfective: the colouring is a completed fact. On this point there is a noticeable difference between AmE and BrE.

American speakers will say things like *I did that already* (where a BrE speaker would say *I've already done that*) even though the adverb *already* calls attention to the prior occurrence and current results of an event. AmE speakers readily understand the use of the perfect in such contexts, but use it less frequently.

3.5.2 The Preterite Perfect

In §3.4.2 we distinguished three main uses of the preterite, and all three of them are found in the preterite perfect, i.e., the construction where the perfect auxiliary is in the preterite form *had*:

- [44] i *She had gone to bed.* [past time]
 ii *It would have been better if she had gone to bed.* [modal remoteness]
 iii *You said she had gone to bed.* [backshift]

- The central use of the preterite is to indicate past time, and when the preterite combines with the perfect, we then have two components of past time. So in [i] her going to bed is located in the past relative to some other past time – such as the time of our arrival in *She had already gone to bed when we arrived*.
- In [44ii] the preterite indicates not past time but modal remoteness. In this example the conditional has a counterfactual interpretation: she didn't go to bed. Because the preterite inflection is here marking modal remoteness, IT CAN'T ALSO INDICATE PAST TIME, so the perfect auxiliary *have* (+ past participle) has to be used for this purpose. (Compare the non-perfect *It would be better if she went to bed*, where the time is the immediate future, not the past.)
- In [44iii], I'm saying your actual words were, 'She went to bed' or 'She has gone to bed'. In reporting what you say, I want to indicate not only that she went to bed in the past, but that it is in the past relative to your time of speaking. I accomplish this by backshifting the past tense *went/has gone* to the preterite perfect.

In all three cases here, the most likely and perhaps only interpretation is perfective.

3.5.3 Perfect with No Primary Tense

The third case to consider is where auxiliary *have* appears in a secondary form, so that there is no primary (inflectional) tense. The perfect in this case serves to locate the situation in past time, just like the preterite in clauses that do have primary tense. Compare the following pairs:

- [45]
- | | PRIMARY TENSE: PRETERITE | NO PRIMARY TENSE: PERFECT |
|----|---|--|
| i | a. <i>We believe that she <u>was</u> in Bonn.</i> | b. <i>We believe her to <u>have been</u> in Bonn.</i> |
| ii | a. <i>As we <u>reached</u> agreement today, we don't need to meet tomorrow.</i> | b. <i><u>Having reached</u> agreement today, we don't need to meet tomorrow.</i> |

In each pair, there is reference to past time in both [a] and [b]. The past time is expressed by the preterite in [a] and the perfect in [b], and without more context, both are likely to be interpreted perfectly.

Examples like these show why we refer to the preterite as the primary past tense and the perfect as the secondary one. The preterite represents the most common, or default, way of locating the situation in past time, but it can't be used in clauses without inflectional tense, such as the *have* clauses in [45ib/iib]: the perfect is then called into service to perform the job that, in the [a] examples, is performed by the preterite.

3.5.4 The Continuative Perfect

One difference between the perfect and the preterite is that we can use the perfect to indicate that the situation lasted over a period starting before a certain time and continuing up to that time, an imperfective interpretation. We call this the **continuative** use of the perfect, as opposed to the **non-continuative** use:

- [46]
- | | NON-CONTINUATIVE PERFECT | CONTINUATIVE PERFECT |
|----|---|---|
| i | a. <i>She <u>has already gone</u> to bed.</i> | b. <i>She <u>has been</u> in bed for two hours.</i> |
| ii | a. <i>She <u>had already gone</u> to bed when we arrived.</i> | b. <i>She <u>had been</u> in bed for two hours when we arrived.</i> |

- In the [a] examples the perfect simply locates her going to bed in the past – relative to the time of speaking in the present perfect [ia] and to the time of our arrival in the preterite perfect [iia]. The act of going to bed is complete, so the interpretation is perfective, even if we infer that she's likely still in bed.
- In the [b] examples, however, her being in bed continued over a period of time: in [ib] it began two hours before the time of speaking, lasting until now, while in [iib] this period began two hours before we arrived, lasting until then. The continuative interpretation is imperfective, so there is no implication in [ib/iib] that the situation of her being in bed ended at the time of utterance or when we arrived. (Similarly for [43ia], which is also continuative.)

The continuative use of the perfect is much less common than the non-continuative one, and is usually marked explicitly by a duration expression giving the length of the period in question, such as *for two hours* in [46], or *since yesterday* in *I've known about it since yesterday* or *I haven't seen her since yesterday* (where the situation that has continued over the time period in question is the state of my not seeing her).

With most verbs, the typical way to express this imperfective semantics is with the progressive aspect. It is only with states, which typically resist the progressive, that the continuative perfect is commonly used, although it is also possible with certain verbs with inherently continuative semantics like *continue* or *stretch*.

3.6 Progressive Aspect

The **progressive** is formed by means of auxiliary *be* followed by a gerund-participle:

- | | | |
|------|---|-------------------------------------|
| [47] | PROGRESSIVE | NON-PROGRESSIVE |
| | a. <i>She <u>was writing</u> a novel.</i> | b. <i>She <u>wrote</u> a novel.</i> |

3.6.1 The Concept of Aspect

A grammatical form or construction qualifies as an **aspect** if its main use is to indicate how the speaker views the situation described in the clause with respect, not to its location in time, but to its temporal structure or properties, such as being imperfective.

In [47] the time referred to is past in both [a] and [b], but the situation is viewed in different ways. In [b] it is considered perfectly, in its totality, as a complete event, whereas in [a] the situation is presented imperfectly, as being in progress at a certain time. The two clauses have the same tense – the preterite – but they differ in aspect.

3.6.2 The Progressive and Imperfectivity

Clauses with progressive form usually have **imperfective** interpretations. We have just noted, for example, that while [47b] is concerned with her writing a novel as a whole, [47a] is not: the former has a perfective interpretation, the latter an imperfective one. Not all clauses with imperfective interpretations, however, have progressive form – compare with the discussion of [28] in §3.3. The characteristic meaning of progressive aspect involves a specific kind of imperfectivity – it presents the situation as being in progress. This implies that the situation has the following two properties:

- it has **DURATION**, rather than being instantaneous, or ‘punctual’;
- it is **DYNAMIC**, rather than static: states don’t progress, they simply hold or prevail.

That means clauses describing punctual or static situations generally appear in the non-progressive:

- | | | | |
|------|-------------------------------------|---|------------|
| [48] | i a. <i>I finally found my key.</i> | b. <i>At last it has stopped raining.</i> | [punctual] |
| | ii a. <i>She has blue eyes.</i> | b. <i>This jug holds two pints.</i> | [static] |

Finding one's key (as opposed to searching for it) is punctual, and one wouldn't say **I was finally finding my key*. Having blue eyes is a state – hence the striking peculiarity of **She is having blue eyes*. It's the same with the other examples.

3.6.3 Contrasts between Non-Progressive and Progressive

The basic meaning of the progressive is to present the situation as being in progress, but this general meaning tends to interact with features relating to the kind of situation being described to yield a more specific interpretation, a more specific difference between a progressive clause and its non-progressive counterpart. Writing a novel, for example, is a situation with a determinate or inherent endpoint – when the novel is completed you can't go on writing it (as opposed to revising or rewriting it). So while [47b] entails that the novel was indeed completed, [47a] does not: she may or may not have gone on to complete it. So progressive *She was writing a novel* does not entail non-progressive *She wrote a novel*. But there is no such sharp difference in the pair *They watched TV* and *They were watching TV*. Watching TV (as opposed to watching a particular programme) does not have a determinate or inherent endpoint, and so we find that if *They were watching TV* is true, so is *They watched TV*. Here, then, progressive *They were watching TV* does entail non-progressive *They watched TV*.

Here are four contrasting pairs of examples where the GRAMMATICAL difference is purely that one is non-progressive and the other is progressive:

[49]	NON-PROGRESSIVE	PROGRESSIVE
i	a. <i>He nodded.</i>	b. <i>He was nodding.</i>
ii	a. <i>He is very tactful.</i>	b. <i>He is being very tactful.</i>
iii	a. <i>She has lived with her parents.</i>	b. <i>She has been living with her parents.</i>
iv	a. <i>She reads <i>The Economist</i>.</i>	b. <i>She is reading <i>The Economist</i>.</i>

- A salient interpretation of [ia] is that there was just one nod. But a nod is punctual, so [ib] cannot normally involve a single nod: it conveys the idea of a sequence of nods.
- The default interpretation of [iia] is as a state: we take it to describe his character/personality. The progressive requires a dynamic component of meaning, and we interpret [iib] in terms of behaviour rather than character: "He is behaving very tactfully".
- Non-progressive [iiia] again describes a state that has held in the past, while the progressive [iiib] conveys that the situation is relatively temporary – it is progressing towards its end. It's a continuative perfect in the progressive.
- The usual interpretation of [iva] is as a state, with regular, habitual reading of *The Economist* magazine: reading it takes too long to permit an interpretation with a single reading in present time, as in *he nods*. The most salient interpretation of [ivb] (though not the only one) is then of a single reading in progress at the present moment.

3.6.4 The Progressive Futurate

There are certain cases where clauses with progressive form do not have the usual “in progress” meaning. The most important involves the futurate construction (see §3.4.1):

- [50] a. *I see my therapist today.*
 b. *I'm seeing my therapist today.*

In both clauses we are concerned with a future act of seeing a therapist. Version [ia] is an ordinary futurate use of the present tense and conveys that an appointment has been set up or is regularly scheduled; [ib] may suggest that too, or else it could simply be that I intend to go and see my therapist today. In either case, the interpretation is perfective. We don't interpret the seeing of the therapist as having already started. We view it as a bounded situation located entirely in future time.

3.7 Modality and the Modal System

The concept of **modality** relates to the ways in which the possible situations described in a clause can relate to reality. If I say *He saw us*, I claim that a male person or animal visually detected, at some point in the past, a group of two or more including me; and the sentence presents that as an assertion of fact about the actual world. But additional words can alter the clause so as to present the content as something necessary or unavoidable, or something merely likely or possible, as illustrated in [51i]; and it can cause the content to be offered not as an assertion but instead as a directive or a giving of permission, as illustrated in [51ii].

- | | | | |
|------|----------------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| [51] | NON-MODAL | MODAL | MODAL |
| i | a. <i>He saw us.</i> | b. <i>He must have seen us.</i> | c. <i>He may have seen us.</i> |
| ii | a. <i>He leaves today.</i> | b. <i>He must leave today.</i> | c. <i>He may leave today.</i> |

- In [i], the [a] version presents him seeing us as a fact in the past of the actual world; in [b] it's only an inference that's expressed (saying he must have means that given what we know there is no other conclusion to draw), and in [c] it's a mere possibility. The [b] and [c] versions are qualified by a modality, expressed by a modal verb, while the [a] version is not.
- In [ii], the [a] version has the force of an assertion about a scheduled departure; [b] is most naturally read either as saying there's no alternative to his leaving because of some obligation, or as a directive that actually imposes that obligation by ordering him to leave; and [c] expresses either a kind of possibility about the future or a grant of permission to leave.

Several different lexical categories can express modality. Something similar to the meaning of [51ib] could be expressed by *Evidently* he saw us; and [51ic] could have its modality expressed by an adverb (*Perhaps* he saw us), or an adjective (*It's possible* that he saw us), or a noun (*There's a possibility* that he saw us). The underlined words here all have meanings that fall within the domain of modality.

Notice that we use **modality** as a semantic term, referring to meanings that express certain kinds of alteration in the relation of clause contents to reality. But the grammatical system most commonly used to express this kind of meaning in informal conversation is the **modal system** of modal auxiliary verbs *can*, *may*, *must*, *will*, etc.

In §3.7.1 we look at the kinds of meaning expressed by the modal auxiliaries. In §3.7.2 we look at the preterite forms of the modals. Then in §3.7.3 we look at the relation between future time and modality, and the controversial issue of whether English can properly be said to have a future tense. The final section, §3.7.4, deals with the use of *were* in constructions like *I wish she were here*, where it is inflectionally distinct from the preterite form *was* and locates the denoted situation in an unrealized possible world.

3.7.1 Meanings of the Modal Auxiliaries

There are three main families of meanings that the modal auxiliaries express, and they have technical terms of Greek origin. Meanings relating to what must be true or could be true given what we know are called **epistemic** (from Greek *epistēmē*, “knowledge”). Meanings relating primarily to what's required or permitted are called **deontic** (from Greek *deon*, “what is obligatory”). And meanings related to physical capability are called **dynamic** (from Greek *dynamikós*, “powerful or effective”). The first two, illustrated in [51], are the most central ones, and we will deal with them together so we can contrast them. After that we'll deal with a couple of cases of dynamic modality.

The Epistemic versus Deontic Contrast

Epistemic modality modifies clause meanings by expressing notions of what's necessary or possible given what we know or believe, while deontic modality expresses meanings relating primarily to what is required or permitted. Both are very familiar concepts, constantly expressed in casual conversation: everyone talks about what's got to be true or might be true, and what they've got to do or are allowed to do. The use of modals to express these two kinds of meaning are illustrated in these pairs:

- | | | |
|------|---|---|
| [52] | EPISTEMIC | DEONTIC |
| i | a. <i>He <u>must</u> have overslept.</i> | b. <i>He <u>must</u> apologize right now.</i> |
| ii | a. <i>She <u>may</u> be resting.</i> | b. <i>She <u>may</u> take as many as she needs.</i> |
| iii | a. <i>The storm <u>should</u> be over soon.</i> | b. <i>They <u>should</u> try again.</i> |

- In the [a] examples, the modals are interpreted **epistemically**: the varying degrees of relation to reality that they convey (whether he overslept, whether she's resting, whether the storm is ending) reflect limitations on the speaker's knowledge. In [ia], we infer that he overslept; in [iia], we don't know she's resting but we also don't know that she isn't, so it's a possibility; in [iiia], we don't know how long the storm will last, but we have reason to believe it won't be long. *Must* in [ia] indicates a strong commitment: we don't accept any possibility of his not having overslept. *May* in [iia] is much weaker: it's a mere possibility. *Should* is somewhere in between: weaker than *must* but a lot stronger than *may*.
- The [b] examples are most naturally interpreted **deontically**: the meanings have to do with OBLIGATION OR PERMISSION of various kinds. The operative notion in [ib] is strong obligation; in [iib], permission; and in [iiib], a milder kind of obligation where it is a matter of what is the right thing to do. These notions all have to do with authority and judgement rather than knowledge and belief. Very often declarative clauses with deontic modals are used in attempts to INFLUENCE WHAT HAPPENS, rather than simply to make assertions.

The link between the two families of meanings is that the concepts of NECESSITY and POSSIBILITY – the key concepts in what philosophers call 'modal logic' – apply to both. The difference is that with epistemic modality, necessity and possibility relate to whether or not something is actually true, whereas with deontic modality they relate to whether or not something happens or is done. In [52i], for example, I'm saying in [a] that it's necessarily true that he overslept and in [b] that it is necessary for him to apologize. Neither example allows for any other possibility.

It's interesting that epistemic and deontic meanings are not generally associated with different expressions, which suggests they are intuitively perceived as related. In fact many examples can easily take either kind of interpretation:

[53] *You must be very tactful.* [epistemic or deontic]

There's an epistemic interpretation of this where it means I have evidence (perhaps from seeing how rarely you provoke conflicts) that leads me to believe you're very tactful. And there is also a deontic one that I might use to tell you there's an obligation or need for you to be very tactful (which might be one way of instructing you to show some tact).

Dynamic Interpretations

Just a few of the modal auxiliaries have uses concerned with abilities or dispositions to behave:

- [54] i *She can speak five languages.* [dynamic]
 ii *I've asked him to help us but he won't.* [dynamic]

These **dynamic** interpretations are somewhat peripheral to the concept of modality. In [i], **can** is used to describe an **ABILITY** (foreign language competence) of hers; in [ii], the negative form of **will** talks about **VOLITION** (unwillingness to help us in this case).

With **can**, we find clear cases where both a dynamic and an epistemic or a deontic interpretation are plausible:

- [55] i *You can't be serious.* [could be epistemic or dynamic]
 ii *She can drive.* [could be deontic or dynamic]

- The epistemic interpretation of [i] denies the possibility that you're being serious: what you've just said is absurd. The dynamic interpretation says something about your personality: you're just incapable of being serious.
- In [ii], the deontic reading is that she has permission to drive, while the dynamic one attributes an ability to her – she knows how to drive.

Usage Controversy Note

Some English teachers claim that **can** does not have a deontic sense in Standard English: they say that permission can only be correctly expressed by **may**. There is simply no truth at all to that claim. **Can** is used frequently in all of the three types of meaning we have mentioned, and has been for centuries. **May** is less common in conversation, and sounds a bit more formal, and so it may sound a bit more polite; but that's a very different issue from grammatical correctness.

This may be a case of people assuming, as many do, that a given word or form has to have a single true meaning. That is not how actual languages work. There are thousands of words that have more than one meaning, and a given meaning is almost always expressible in more than one way. In English, and in languages quite generally, polysemy (having more than one sense per word) is completely normal, especially for common words.

3.7.2 The Preterite Forms of the Modals

Four of the modal auxiliaries, **can**, **may**, **will**, and **shall**, have preterite forms – **could**, **might**, **would**, and **should** respectively. It is quite clear that they are preterites, but it must also be stressed that they are highly exceptional in their behaviour. We'll look briefly at both the similarities and the differences between the preterites of the modals and other preterites as discussed in §3.2.2.

Similarities with Ordinary Preterites

Could and **would** can be used with past time meaning and in the subordinate part of a remote conditional, and all four preterites are found in backshift:

- [56] i *I asked him to help me, but he couldn't/wouldn't.* [past time]
 ii *We'd save a lot of money if you could/would cycle to work.* [remote conditional]
 iii *I thought I could/would/should/might see her yesterday, but* [backshift]
I had to work late at the office.

Backshift is OBLIGATORY in the context of [iii], so for most speakers it would be ungrammatical to replace the preterite forms by present tense *can/will/shall/may*. (For the speakers who do allow *may* in [iii], *might* is no longer used as the preterite of *may*.)

Differences from Other Preterites

With other verbs, the modal remoteness use of the preterite is restricted to a few subordinate constructions, but with the modal auxiliaries it occurs freely in main clauses, with examples like these:

- [57] i *I could/would/should/might do it if they offered to pay me.*
 ii *You could/might have been killed!*
 iii *Could/Would you help me move these boxes?*
 iv *You should apologize.*

- Example [i] is a remote conditional construction (the open counterpart being *I can/will/shall/may do it if they offer to pay me*). Both the modal auxiliary and *offered* are modal preterites, but while any modal preterite can occur in the subordinate clause, only a modal auxiliary can occur in the main clause. For that reason, a modal auxiliary is obligatory in the main clause of a remote conditional. *I did it if they offered to pay me*, for example, can only be interpreted as an open conditional, meaning approximately “I used to do it provided/when-ever they offered to pay me”, with *offered* referring to past time. It can't be understood with *offered* as a remote preterite.
- The salient interpretation of [ii] is that you've done something reckless, putting you at risk of being killed – but in fact you weren't killed.
- In [iii], an interrogative clause is used as a request: I'm asking for your help (cf. §10.4.4). The preterites here sound more polite and diffident than present tense *can* and *will*.
- In [iv], you owe someone an apology: the right thing for you to do is to apologize. In Present-day English, this use of preterite *should* is not generally perceived as semantically related to present tense *shall*. The use of *shall* to say what's going to happen is vastly less common than the use of *should* (in fact *shall* is almost extinct for a lot of people), and *should* does not stand in the same semantic relation to *shall* as *could* and *would* in [iii] do to *can* and *will*. Moreover, there is no use of *shall* comparable to the epistemic *should* of *The storm should be over very soon*.

3.7.3 Futurity and Modality

English has several ways of locating a situation in future time, including the following:

- | | | | |
|------|-----|--|--------------------------|
| [58] | i | <i>Sam <u>will</u> be here soon.</i> | [<i>will</i>] |
| | ii | <i>I <u>shall</u> carry on no matter what happens.</i> | [<i>shall</i>] |
| | iii | <i>Everything <u>is going</u> to be okay.</i> | [<i>be going + to</i>] |
| | iv | <i>The train <u>is about</u> to leave.</i> | [<i>about + to</i>] |
| | v | <i>I <u>am seeing</u> him tonight.</i> | [present progressive] |
| | vi | <i>The train <u>leaves</u> in ten minutes</i> | [simple present tense] |

- Example [i] illustrates the most common case: futurity marked by auxiliary *will*.
- *Shall*, as in [ii], is increasingly rare as a way of expressing futurity, and many speakers hardly use it at all for that purpose (it survives in interrogatives expressing a suggestion, as in *Shall I open it for you?*, where, in a sense, the opening will happen in the future if the suggestion is accepted).
- *Be + going* in [iii] is an idiom: literally it consists of the progressive auxiliary *be* and the lexical verb *go*, but the latter has lost its motion meaning and the idiom serves merely to signal futurity – typically the near future. The idiom has to be followed by an infinitival complement with *to*. (*Going* often merges phonologically with *to*, as shown in the informal spelling *gonna*.)
- The adjective *about* in [iv] is used to express reference to the immediate future.
- The present progressive and simple present tense in [v–vi] involve secondary uses of forms whose primary use is to locate the situation in present time: see the discussions of [50] and the futurate [31] respectively.

Traditional grammar takes the *will* and *shall* of [i–ii] to be future-tense auxiliaries: English is said to have a tense system contrasting past, present, and future. The view taken here, however, in a major departure of much modern work from traditional grammars, is that there is no future tense in English: *will* and *shall* belong to the modal system, not the tense system. Our argument is presented in three steps, focusing primarily on *will*.

***Will* Doesn't Contrast with Past and Present: It Combines with Them**

The traditional account has *will take* contrasting with *takes* and *took* as future vs present vs past. But the auxiliary *will* is itself a verb which inflects for present and past tense: *will* is the present tense form and *would* the past tense form.

[59]	PRESENT TENSE	PAST TENSE
i	a. <i>She has only just entered Parliament, but in a few years, she <u>will</u> become a minister.</i>	b. <i>She had only just entered Parliament, but in a few years, she <u>would</u> become a minister.</i>
ii	a. <i>I've already asked him, but he <u>won't</u> help.</i>	b. <i>I had already asked him, but he <u>wouldn't</u> help.</i>

- In [i], we have a contrast between becoming a minister in the future relative to now and becoming a minister in the future relative to a time in the past.
- In [ii], the contrast is between not helping because of his present unwillingness and not helping because of his past unwillingness.

(The preterite *would* is here used to indicate past time – for the modal remoteness and backshift uses, see §3.4.2 and 3.7.2 above.)

Notice that auxiliary *will* is not mutually exclusive with the present and past tense inflections: it can combine with either of them. The traditional analysis with a system of past vs present vs future gets this wrong. Treating *will* as a future tense auxiliary would mean having two independent tense systems: past vs present, and future vs non-future. The second clause in the [a] examples of [59] would be both future and present, and the one in the [b] examples would be both future and past. That's not the analysis we're going to opt for.

Intrinsic Connection between Futurity and Modality

The key difference between the future on one hand and the past and present on the other concerns our knowledge of them: in general, we can't make strictly factual statements about the future, but we generally can about the past and present. This is apparent from such examples as these:

[60]	i	a. <i>She won in under an hour.</i>	b.	<i>She will win in under an hour.</i>
	ii	a. <i>He likes you.</i>	b.	<i>He will like you.</i>

The [a] examples can be taken as statements of fact, whereas [ib] and [iib] have more of the character of predictions. They may be confident predictions, but they're just predictions, not statements that anyone could know to be true.

This difference doesn't itself mean that *will* can't be an auxiliary expressing a future tense: there are languages that have a genuine future tense. But it should make us more ready to accept that a language may indicate future time in a radically different way from past and present time. This is what we find in English.

There are cases where we can make what would be regarded as effectively factual statements about the future, as in examples like *Fred will be 21 on Friday*: all that is needed for this to be true is that Friday is the twenty-first anniversary of his birth and

that he survives the next few days. But notice that we could here also use a simple present tense in its futurate use: *Fred is 21 on Friday*. So it's instructive to see how much more limited the simple present is than the form with *will* when the time referred to is in the future. Compare, for example:

- [61] a. *Australia meets Sweden in the Davis Cup final in December.* b. *Australia will meet Sweden in the Davis Cup final in December.*

The simple present tense version in [a] is appropriate only in a context where the finalists have already been determined, whereas the *will* version in [b] could be used to make a prediction earlier in the competition (when it isn't clear who will survive until December without being knocked out of the tournament). Both versions locate the situation in future time, so the difference in meaning between them can't be a matter of time. The difference is a matter of modality: [a] expresses an assurance that is lacking in [b].

Will Is a Modal Like *Can*, *May*, and *Must*

The crucial fact in our argument is the close resemblance between *will* and the undisputed modal auxiliaries *can*, *may*, *must*, etc. They share the three properties listed in §3.2.2, together with a fourth one introduced in §3.7.2 involving the remote conditional construction.

- *Will* has no secondary inflectional forms – no plain form, no gerund-participle and no past participle:

- [62] i. **I expect to will work late tonight.* [no plain form]
 ii. **I am willing work late tonight.* [no gerund-participle]
 iii. **I had would work hard that night.* [no past participle]

- *Will* has no distinct 3rd person singular present tense form: the form *will* occurs with all types of subject (we don't get **he wills go*).
- *Will* occurs with a bare infinitival complement: *I will/shall work late tonight.*
- *Will* can occur in the main clause of a remote conditional construction, which we have seen requires the presence of a member of a small class of auxiliary verbs, normally one of the preterite forms *could*, *might*, or *would*:

- [63] i. *If you had told me earlier, I could/might/would have helped them.*
 ii. **If you had told me earlier, I had helped them*

The subordinate clauses here are interpreted counterfactually: you didn't tell me earlier. *Will* belongs with *can* and *may* in being able to satisfy the highly restrictive requirement on the form of the main clause; [ii] does not satisfy this requirement and is hence ungrammatical.

All of these facts support the claim that *will* belongs in the same grammatical subclass as *can*, *may*, *must*, etc.: the modal auxiliaries. (Everything we've said also applies to the other modal associated with futurity, *shall*, but we've set that aside because it is becoming very rare in contemporary English.) Like the rest of the modals, *will* occurs with present or past tense but not with other modals.

It is certainly true that the most frequent use of *will* is to indicate futurity, so it is certainly not a prototypical case of a modal. But *will* can be used about the past and the present with a very clearly modal meaning; compare:

- [64] i a. *She left Paris yesterday.* b. *She will have left Paris yesterday.*
 ii a. *That is the plumber.* b. *That will be the plumber.*

The [a] examples are presented as factual statements about the past and present respectively, whereas the [b] examples have the character of confident assumptions: *will* here is indisputably expressing a kind of epistemic modality.

Will also often conveys volition or intention – a kind of dynamic modality. If I say *I will do everything I can to help you* I am not just stating what will happen but making a commitment; see also the negative *won't* and *wouldn't* in [59ii], indicating refusal. And if I say in exasperation *The dog will keep digging in the flower beds*, I mean the dog intentionally digs in that flower bed – I'm commenting on the dog's habitual volitional activity, not making a prediction.

Shall was formerly common for expressing future time reference with 1st person subjects (⁰*I shall be there in a minute*) but has been falling out of use for many decades. However, it is still found in a few cases where the meaning is clearly modal:

- [65] i *One more coat of paint should be enough.*
 ii *Shall we give it another try?*

Should in [i] is a modal use of the preterite of *shall* expressing epistemic probability – the expectation that if things are as they ought to be, one more coat will suffice. And [ii] illustrates that in interrogatives *shall* is commonly used to ask the addressee to decide what we or I should do. A typical answer would be something like *Yes, let's*, or an imperative, like *Go for it*.

Shall is also found in very formal writing, in contexts such as legal documents to decree what is required: *The chair shall call a general meeting of the membership once a year*.

In summary, *will* and *shall* do not merely indicate future time. Grammatically, and to a very significant extent semantically, they are auxiliary verbs in the same class as the undisputed modal auxiliaries *can*, *may*, and *must*. English does not have a future tense.

3.7.4 Irrealis *Were*

English once (a thousand years ago) had a larger and more complex inflectional system, which over the centuries has been almost entirely lost. Some meaning distinctions that once had special inflected forms are now conveyed in part by tense. We noted in §3.4.2 the difference in meaning contrasts between preterite and present in [66i] and the underlined clauses in [66ii]:

- | | | | | |
|------|----|---|--|--|
| [66] | | PRETERITE TENSE | | PRESENT TENSE |
| | i | a. <i>He loved Ty.</i> | | b. <i>He loves Ty.</i> |
| | ii | a. <i>If <u>he loved Ty</u>, he'd go.</i> | | b. <i>If <u>he loves Ty</u>, he'll go.</i> |

In [i] the contrast is straightforwardly one of time: [ia] refers to past time, [ib] to present time. In [ii], however, the contrast is one of modality: [iia] presents his loving Ty as a somewhat more remote possibility than [iib]. It is for this reason that we refer to *loved* in [iia] as a **modal preterite** – a use of the preterite where the meaning has to do with modality, not time.

But something special can happen when the verb concerned is *be* and the subject is 1st or 3rd person singular. We get two possibilities, one a bit more formal than the other. One familiar pattern parallels [66] exactly:

- | | | | | |
|------|----|--|--|---|
| [67] | | PRETERITE TENSE | | PRESENT TENSE |
| | i | a. <i>He was in love with Ty.</i> | | b. <i>He is in love with Ty.</i> |
| | ii | a. <i>If <u>he was in love with Ty</u>, he'd go.</i> | | b. <i>If <u>he's in love with Ty</u>, he'll go.</i> |

In the [a] examples, *was* differs only in semantics: in [ia] it has the central preterite meaning of past time, and in [iia] it is a modal preterite.

But there is another possibility for [iia], with a slight stylistic difference: the form *were* can be used. It expresses the same modality – remoteness from the facts – but with a different inflectional form, which we'll call the **irrealis** use:

- | | | | | |
|------|----|--|--|--|
| [68] | | IRREALIS | | PRESENT TENSE |
| | a. | <i>If <u>he were in love with Ty</u>, he'd go.</i> | | b. <i>If <u>he is in love with Ty</u>, he'll go.</i> |

When the verb lexeme is *be*, the modal meaning can be expressed by a different form from the temporal meaning, instead of being different meanings of the form *was*.

Be is highly exceptional in this respect: no other verb in the language has a special form distinct from the preterite to express the remoteness modality. And even *be* only has the special irrealis form in the 1st and 3rd person singular (because in the 2nd person, the form is always *were* regardless of the sense). This is a tiny relic of an earlier system, and it may be slowly fading away: some speakers nearly always use preterite *was* instead, except perhaps in a few very common fixed expressions like *if I were you*.

Be is unique in another way as well, with having three different agreement forms in the present tense (instead of the usual two) and two different preterite forms

(instead of one). So it's by far the most irregular verb in the entire English vocabulary. Here is its uniquely complex full paradigm (which you can see has an unfilled slot at one point):

[69]

PRIMARY FORMS						
	NEUTRAL			NEGATIVE		
	1st sg	3rd sg	Other	1st sg	3rd sg	Other
Present	<i>am</i>	<i>is</i>	<i>are</i>	—	<i>isn't</i>	<i>aren't</i>
Preterite	<i>was</i>		<i>were</i>	<i>wasn't</i>		<i>weren't</i>
Irrealis	<i>were</i>			<i>weren't</i>		

SECONDARY FORMS		
PLAIN FORM	PAST PARTICIPLE	GERUND-PARTICIPLE
<i>be</i>	<i>been</i>	<i>being</i>

There are two minor peculiarities about the present tense negative forms of this most peculiar of all verbs.

- The form we'd expect for the 1st person singular negative, ⁰*amn't*, occurs only in certain regional BrE dialects (in Scotland and Northern Ireland); most speakers use the non-3rd-person singular form *aren't* in clauses with subject-auxiliary inversion; that is, people say *Aren't I clever?*, though never **I aren't clever*. In order to express the 1st person singular present negative with preceding subject, speakers use *I'm not*, using the reduced 'm form of *am* with the separate word *not*.
- The form ¹*ain't* has survived from earlier regional dialects but is notoriously a non-standard negative form regardless of person (as mentioned in §1.1.4). Standard English speakers do use *ain't*, but it's always special in some way – a deliberate borrowing from other dialects, for some kind of emphasis or humorous effect.

We include the irrealis forms among the primary forms: they are the ones that have a neutral vs negative contrast (compare *if I were involved* and *if I weren't involved*). And we call the non-negative forms in [69] 'neutral' rather than 'positive', because they occur in both positive and negative clauses: we find *is* in both *That is true* and *That is not true*.

Traditional grammars tend to talk about 'subjunctive' forms of verbs in English, calling *be* the 'present subjunctive' and irrealis *were* the 'past subjunctive'. This is a mistake. There are no grounds for treating irrealis *were* as a past tense counterpart of the use of *be* found in subjunctive constructions like *It's vital that he be told*. Irrealis *were* does not make reference to past time, and doesn't occur as a backshifted

counterpart of *be*. That is, you can't say **It was vital that he were told*. We don't use 'subjunctive' as a term for an inflectional form at all (that's why it doesn't appear in [69]); we use it only for a syntactic construction that employs the plain form of the verb (see [3] in §3.1.1).

Exercises on Chapter 3

1. For some but not all of the following verb lexemes, the **preterite** and **past participle** forms have distinct shapes. Say for each whether the shapes are the same or different and make up examples to show that you are right.

Example: *teach* same: *I taught them. They've been taught.*

- i *bring*
- ii *buy*
- iii *draw*
- iv *drink*
- v *fall*
- vi *forget*
- vii *hold*
- viii *ride*
- ix *run*
- x *sing*

2. The underlined verbs below are forms of lexemes whose **preterite** and **past participle** have the same shape. Use the substitution test to determine which form occurs in these instances, citing the evidence you use (see §3.1.2).

- i *I don't think they found anything suspicious.*
- ii *That's the edition I recommended.*
- iii *She wasn't one of those arrested.*
- iv *Do you think they'll get tested?*
- v *Haven't you seen the snowman they made?*
- vi *Get it checked right away.*
- vii *Who said it was mine?*
- viii *I don't want anyone hurt.*
- ix *I met him on a Monday.*
- x *I don't believe we've met.*

3. Determine whether the underlined verbs below are **plain forms** or **plain present tense forms**. Again, present the evidence on which you base your decision.

- i *The twins, he says, seem quite lovely.*
- ii *It would be best to say something about it.*
- iii *He thinks they didn't notice him.*

- iv *I could help you change that.*
- v *Let's go to the movies.*
- vi *We have written to the editor.*
- vii *They appreciate what you're doing for them.*
- viii *Tell me what you want.*
- ix *I think that you really know her.*
- x *Do you know what time it is?*

4. The verb **beware** (as in *Beware of the dog*) is highly exceptional in its inflection. Construct example sentences containing the following kinds of clause with a form of **beware**, marking the ones that turn out to be ungrammatical with *.
- i a clause with 3rd person singular subject and present tense verb
 - ii a clause with plural subject and present tense verb
 - iii an imperative clause
 - iv a subjunctive clause
 - v an infinitival clause
 - vi a gerund-participial clause
 - vii a past-participial clause

On the basis of your data give a **paradigm** (see §3.1.1) for **beware**, leaving blank any position where the **inflectional form** is missing for this verb.

5. Change the following **declarative** clauses into **interrogatives**, write out the result, and say on this basis whether the underlined verbs are **auxiliaries** or **lexical verbs**.
- i *They were informed of the change.*
 - ii *She would rather we met later.*
 - iii *They ought to accept the offer.*
 - iv *They used to live together.*
 - v *We have to keep them informed.*
 - vi *They need to replace the cartridge.*
 - vii *I should inform the police.*
 - viii *They had it repaired.*
 - ix *You usually help clear up.*
 - x *They keep telling her that.*

6. Use the two **negation** tests from §3.2.1 to determine the status of the underlined verbs as auxiliaries or lexical verbs. If the tests disagree, explain your determination.

Example: *I like pizza. *I like not pizza. *I liken't pizza.* (not an auxiliary)

- i *You must get involved.*
- ii *It is going to rain.*
- iii *They tend to disagree.*
- iv *She would like to see them.*

- v *I saw them leave.*
- vi *He wants to tell her.*
- vii *He may have told her already.*
- viii *I'm going to solve it.*
- ix *They can sardines to preserve them.*
- x *They can preserve sardines.*

7. In the uses illustrated in the following examples, the three underlined verbs bear some semantic and/or syntactic similarity to the **modal auxiliaries**, though syntactically they're not similar enough to modals to be included in the class.

- i *You are to report for duty at 8 a.m.*
- ii *We have to ask what's best for the child.*
- iii *They don't like it.*

Take the three verbs in turn and determine which, if any, of the three **modal auxiliary properties** described in this chapter apply to them. Construct examples where necessary and explain your reasoning.

8. Determine whether the underlined verb forms in the following examples are instances of the **auxiliary lexemes** *have*, *need*, and *dare* or instances of the corresponding **lexical verbs**.

- i *They had better hurry or they'll miss it.*
- ii *They had their house burgled.*
- iii *They had to call the police.*
- iv *I had the staff do a thorough search.*
- v *I have an idea about that.*
- vi *I doubt whether we needed to see it.*
- vii *We need more time to finish the work.*
- viii *I don't think you need have any worries.*
- ix *Did anyone dare remind him of his promise?*
- x *Not one of them dare voice any criticism.*

9. Which of the following allow a **perfective** interpretation (see §3.3.1)? Consider just the main clauses, ignoring any subordinate ones embedded within them.

- i *I think it's a disgrace.*
- ii *I suggest you give up the idea.*
- iii *I now add a sprinkling of pepper.*
- iv *I want to get out of here.*
- v *I do my own shopping.*

10. We have seen in this chapter that subordinate clauses functioning as complements of *before*, *if*, and *hope* can have a **future time** interpretation. For

example, *if it rains* in *We'll postpone the match if it rains* doesn't mean "if it is raining now", it means "if rain falls at some future time". For each of the following five preposition + clause combinations, construct an example to show whether or not the clause permits a future time interpretation.

PREPOSITIONS	CLAUSE
i <i>after</i> +	<i>I bet you \$5</i>
ii <i>although</i> +	<i>I expect you're right</i>
iii <i>because</i> +	<i>she realizes her mistake</i>
iv <i>unless</i> +	<i>they regret the decision</i>
v <i>until</i> +	<i>I wish it would stop</i>

(You should avoid examples with a futurate interpretation like *I know that we leave for Berlin next Tuesday*. For these, subordination is irrelevant: the interpretation is the same as for the main clause *We leave for Berlin next Tuesday*. Futurate examples don't provide relevant evidence.)

11. Classify the following conditional constructions as **open** or **remote** (see §3.4.2). For the open ones, give their remote counterparts, and conversely for the remote ones give their open counterparts.

- i *It won't matter if I'm a little late.*
- ii *He could easily get a job if he wanted one.*
- iii *It would be disastrous if they saw the files.*
- iv *If you don't pay up they'll call the police.*
- v *You can stay here if you're stuck.*

(Note that some open conditionals lack remote counterparts, and some remote conditionals lack open counterparts. Here we are considering only cases where the two constructions are in contrast.)

12. For each of the following statements, imagine that someone called Bo made that statement yesterday. Write reports of the speech events in question, in the form *Bo said that ...* For each one give a **backshifted** report, and in those cases where backshift is optional give a non-backshifted report too.

Example: *It's too late.* *Bo said that it was too late* and *Bo said that it's too late*.

- i *My father has a weak heart.*
- ii *Ed is arriving this evening.*
- iii *I have a terrible headache.*
- iv *I've moved to Florida.*
- v *Everyone thinks I'm overreacting.*

13. For the following examples, give counterparts in which the clause with the underlined verb has been put in the **perfect tense**.

Example: I did it. I had done it.

- i I hope to finish soon.
- ii You should tell her the truth.
- iii They mislaid the file.
- iv He admitted being an alcoholic.
- v She is very helpful.

14. Describe, as carefully as you can, any difference in meaning or use between the [a] and [b] members of the following pairs.

Example:

- a. I have lived in Edinburgh.
- b. I lived in Edinburgh.

They both mean that, in the past, I was a resident of Edinburgh, and both strongly imply a perfective interpretation, though [a] allows an imperfective one ("and I still do"). On top of that, [a] implies some kind of relevance to the current topic or situation.

- i a. I've been in the army for two years.
- b. I was in the army for two years.
- ii a. Have you seen Jill?
- b. Did you see Jill?
- iii a. It was the best meal I've had all week.
- b. It was the best meal I had all that week.
- iv a. She has gone to Moscow.
- b. She went to Moscow.
- v a. I've got the milk.
- b. I got the milk.

15. As in Exercise 11, classify the following conditionals as **open** or **remote**, and give the counterpart of the opposite category. These examples differ from the earlier ones in that they all involve the **perfect tense**.

- i If she hadn't sold her shares she would be very rich.
- ii If the secretary hadn't called the police someone else would have.
- iii If Ed has gone on holiday you can stay in his room.
- iv If Jill didn't report the fault, Max may have.
- v If you had finished your work yesterday, you could come with us tomorrow.

16. Give **progressive aspect** counterparts to the following examples. Keep the tense the same.

- i She lived in Berlin.

- ii *He may regret his impulsiveness.*
- iii *They neglect their children.*
- iv *I have read the newspaper.*
- v *He didn't pay any attention.*

17. Explain any difference in meaning or use between the [a] and [b] members of the following pairs.

Example:

a. *I live in Toronto.*

b. *I'm living in Toronto.*

They are both true in the same circumstances, that I am a current resident of Toronto. But [b] implies that I view my stay as temporary, like maybe an international student there.

- i a. *I cycle to work.*
b. *I'm cycling to work.*
- ii a. *When Tom called she phoned me.*
b. *When Tom called she was phoning me.*
- iii a. *The train arrived.*
b. *The train was arriving.*
- iv a. *You annoy me.*
b. *You're annoying me.*
- v a. *He wrote an editorial.*
b. *He was writing an editorial.*

18. Discuss the interpretation of the following examples with respect to the distinction between **epistemic**, **deontic**, and **dynamic** modality, bearing in mind that some of them are ambiguous (see §3.7.1).

Example: *I ought to let you go.* The verb *ought* expresses deontic modality, meaning that letting you go is the right thing to do. It's not epistemic: the question of whether it will probably turn out that I'll let you go is not at issue. Nor is it dynamic, because my ability or willingness to let you go also doesn't come into it.

- i *Bill is one of those people who must always have the last word.*
- ii *Could I have another beer, please?*
- iii *It may easily be shown that this is false.*
- iv *It must surely rain soon.*
- v *It needn't have been Jill that wrote the note.*
- vi *She can't live with her parents.*
- vii *There could be some other reason.*
- viii *These animals can be dangerous.*

ix *They should be in Paris by now.*

x *You needn't bother to answer.*

- 19.** [Supplementary exercise] Some irregular verbs may be regularizing (*show*, *showed*, **shewn*), while some regular verbs are becoming irregular (*sneak*, *snuck*). Find a number of such verbs and poll your classmates about their usage.

4

Complements in Clauses

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter we begin our account of clause structure, focusing on complements in the verb phrase (VP) (as opposed to adjuncts, which are dealt with in [Chapter 8](#)). We will be mostly concerned with illuminating the structure of canonical clauses. Every canonical clause has a head – a predicate – with the form of a VP. Every VP in turn has as its head a verb (V). Therefore a canonical clause always contains a V – the one that we will call the **head verb** of its predicate. This head verb is the most important element in determining the grammatical structure of the rest of the clause.

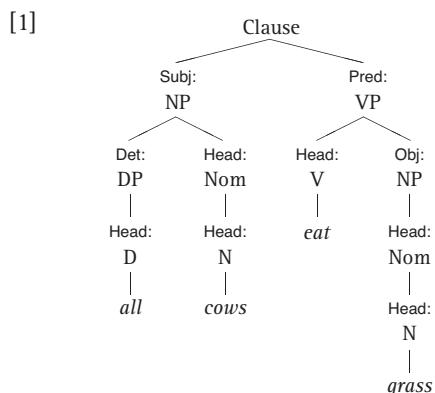
4.1.1 Predicates and Heads

The grammatical term ‘head’ only became common in the second half of the twentieth century. When we talk about clause structure we will generally use the long-established terminological practice of calling the two major elements in the clause the subject and the predicate (see [§1.3](#)). In *All cows eat grass*, the noun phrase (NP) *all cows* is subject and the VP *eat grass* is predicate. The idea is that in elementary examples like this the predicate represents what is semantically ‘predicated of’, or said about, whatever the subject refers to.

‘Predicate’ is a more specific term than ‘head’ used when the construction concerned is a clause: we could just call the predicate the head of the clause. The head of the predicate is a verb – *eat* in this example, the head verb of the clause.

4.1.2 Diagramming Clause Structure

The full structure of a clause like *All cows eat grass* can be represented in tree diagram form as in [\[1\]](#).



This diagram expresses in graphic form a significant amount of information about the function and category of the various units or constituents (i.e., words, phrases, clauses, etc.):

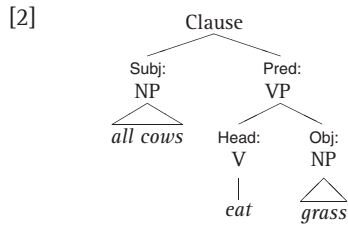
- *All cows eat grass* belongs to the category ‘clause’. (It’s convenient to treat main clauses as constituents even though they’re not parts of any bigger unit; otherwise some clauses would be constituents and others not. For us, ‘constituent’ means ‘unit’, not ‘sub-part of a larger unit’.)
- The clause is divided into two constituents functioning as the subject and the predicate.
- The subject (*all cows*) precedes the predicate (*eat grass*).
- The subject takes the form of a noun phrase (NP), and the predicate is a VP.
- The VP contains a head and an object.
- The head of the VP precedes the object.
- The head has the category label V and the object is labelled NP.
- *All* is a determinative, and is the head of a determinative phrase labelled DP. (In this example the DP has its head as its only constituent, but notice that we could have *nearly all*, or *just about all*, or *absolutely all*.)
- *Eat* is a verb; *cows* and *grass* are nouns.

All this and more is conveyed by the diagram in [1]. No function is assigned to the clause itself because functions relate a constituent to the larger constituent it is an immediate part of and plays a role in, and the clause as a whole doesn’t play a role in any larger construction. However, each of the other units is given a dual label, the first part indicating the function of the constituent in the construction immediately containing it, and the second (after the colon) giving the category it belongs to.

4.1.3 An Abbreviatory Convention for Diagrams

Sometimes, when the structure inside some phrase is not of current interest or relevance, we will represent clauses with just a triangle covering the bit of the

structure we aren't bothering to represent. So the tree in [1] might sometimes be given in this much more compact form:



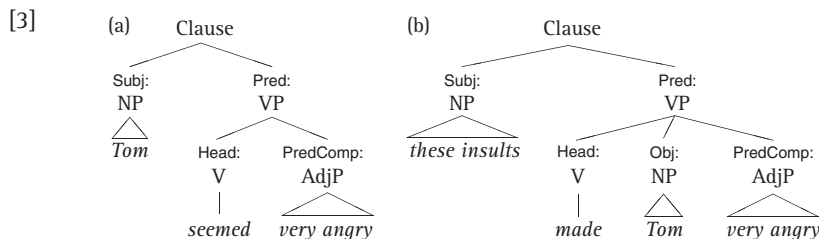
We're still assuming that *all* is a determinative which is the head of a DP, and following it is a head noun spelled *cows*, and so on; we just don't show all of that detail in the more compact version of the diagram. If we're mainly concerned with the structure of the clause, and not the internal structure of its noun phrases, the extra detail inside the NPs is just visual clutter.

4.1.4 Lexical Heads Determine Some Phrase Contents

It is the lexical head of the VP that very largely determines what can occur in a clause. For example, it is a crucial property of the verb *like* that it permits occurrence of an object (indeed, it normally requires one in canonical clauses), and a crucial property of *keep* (meaning “retain ownership of”) that it requires an object. From now on, we will say that lexical heads *license* complements of a certain sort.

A large percentage of the verbs in English license an object, but some do not: examples include *arise*, *elapse*, *expire*, *faint*, *fall*, *seethe*, *vanish*, etc. So **The dog vanished the water* is not a grammatical clause, though both *The dog vanished* and *The dog vanished into the water* are grammatical.

Some verbs allow or require, within the VP, a constituent with some function other than object. In *Tom seemed very angry*, for example, *seem* licenses a predicative complement with the form of an adjective phrase (AdjP), namely *very angry*; and in *These insults made Tom very angry* the verb *make* licenses both an object (*Tom*) and a predicative complement (*very angry*). The structures of these clauses are shown in [3]. ‘PredComp’ stands for ‘predicative complement’, and as explained above, we don’t show the interior structure of NPs or AdjPs because that structure is not relevant to the point about verbs that we’re making.



We'll outline the distinctive properties of objects and predicative complements in §§4.3–4.4; here the important point to note is that whether an object and/or predicative complement is allowed in a clause depends on WHICH VERB IS THE HEAD VERB.

4.1.5 Complements and Modifiers

The dependents in a VP are of two main kinds: **complements** and **modifiers**. The admissibility of a complement depends on the head verb belonging to a particular subclass of verbs. The term we use for this is licensing: complements have to be licensed by a head.

The object is one kind of complement, and we can illustrate the concept of licensing by considering the occurrence of an object with the three verbs shown in [4]:

- | | | | | | | |
|-----|-----|----|------------------------------------|----|----------------------------|--------------------|
| [4] | i | a. | <i>Have you devoured the fish?</i> | b. | <i>*Have you devoured?</i> | [object required] |
| | ii | a. | <i>Have you eaten the fish?</i> | b. | <i>Have you eaten?</i> | [object optional] |
| | iii | a. | <i>*Have you dined the fish?</i> | b. | <i>Have you dined?</i> | [object forbidden] |

An object such as *the fish* is admissible with the verbs *devour* and *eat* (which we'll call transitive verbs), but not with *dine* (an intransitive verb). [iia] is ungrammatical, as is any other clause where the verb *dine* is accompanied by an object as a dependent. This is why the object qualifies as a complement. It is admissible only with certain verbs, in the sense that it can occur only if the verb licenses it.

There is a further difference between *devour* and *eat* (rather surprisingly, since the meanings are so similar): with *eat* the object is optional, whereas with *devour* it is obligatory, so [iib] is grammatical but [ib] is not. The status of a dependent as a complement is most obvious when it is obligatory for at least some heads. But this is not essential: the crucial feature of licensing is that the admissibility of the element depends on the presence of an appropriate head.

The occurrence of modifiers is not restricted in this way. A modifier, whatever phrasal category it may belong to, can occur freely, essentially without regard to what the verb is (though of course it can be semantically inappropriate or bizarre given what the sentence says). AdjPs and DPs generally can't be modifiers in VPs.

The examples in [5] illustrate some of the differences between complements (underlined) and modifiers (in brackets).

- | | | | |
|-----|-----|--|-----------------------------|
| [5] | i | <i>I abandoned <u>it</u> [without asking for details].</i> | [NP comp; PP adjunct] |
| | ii | <i>I consulted <u>your father</u> [this morning].</i> | [NP comp; NP adjunct] |
| | iii | <i>They [even now] keep <u>complaining about it</u>.</i> | [AdvP adjunct; Clause comp] |
| | iv | <i>He was <u>bankrupt</u> – [not that anyone knew].</i> | [AdjP comp; Clause adjunct] |

Notice how the modifiers (*without asking for details; this morning; even now; not that anyone knew*) can always be omitted without making the sentence ungrammatical. Complements, though, are often obligatory: omitting *it* from [i] or *complaining about it* in [iii] yields ungrammatical results. Notice also that changing a lexical head can yield ungrammatical results if the replacement doesn't license the complement: changing *consulted* to *conversed* in [ii] gives the ungrammatical **I conversed your father this morning*, and changing *keep* to the roughly synonymous *persist* in [iii] produces **They even now persist complaining about it*.

For the rest of this chapter we will be concerned only with complements; we come back to modifiers in §6.2, and in Chapters 7 and 8.

4.1.6 Subjects Are External Complements

We have shown that the object is a kind of complement in the VP since it satisfies the licensing requirement. We argue that the subject is also a kind of complement, but the reasoning is rather different. All canonical clauses contain a subject, which might suggest that subjects are compatible with any head verb. However, there are restrictions on what categories can function as the subject for certain VPs, so the concept of licensing applies here too. The subject of [6i] doesn't work for [6ii]:

- [6] i Whether we will finish on time depends primarily on the weather.
 ii **Whether we will finish on time* infuriated me.

The underlined expression in [6i] is a subordinate clause functioning as the subject of the larger clause that forms the whole sentence. It is, more specifically, a subordinate closed interrogative clause: *Will we finish on time?* would be the main clause counterpart. A subject with this syntactic form has to be licensed by the predicate of the main clause, the VP – or, more specifically, the head verb. It is admissible with *depend*, but there are a great many other verbs such as *infuriate*, *see*, *think*, *yearn*, etc., that never license subjects of this form; so [6ii], for example, is ungrammatical.

In a few cases the choice of verb uniquely fixes what the subject can be: choosing *rain* or *snow* as the head verb requires choosing the meaningless pronoun *it* as the subject: compare *It is snowing in Texas* with **Texas is snowing*.

For reasons of this sort we take subjects to be complements. But they are different from other types of complement in an obvious way: they are in the clause, but positioned outside the VP. We'll refer to the subject as an **external complement**. The other complements that are internal to the VP will be referred to (when it's relevant to make the contrast) as **internal complements**.

4.2 The Subject

4.2.1 Distinctive Syntactic Properties of the Subject in English

It is typical for the subject of a clause to be an NP. The only other form of subject common enough to deserve comment here is a subordinate clause, as illustrated in [6i].

The subject is sharply distinguished from other elements in clause structure by the combination of a number of syntactic properties. The following survey covers four particularly important ones.

Basic Position

The basic position of the subject – the one it occupies in all canonical clauses – is before the VP that functions as predicate. There are non-canonical constructions where an auxiliary verb precedes the subject (recall §3.2.1, and see below), but most sentences in almost any kind of English text have subject–predicate order.

Case

For a small handful of NPs there is an inflectional distinction of case that separates subjects from most non-subjects. The NPs concerned are mainly those consisting of the personal pronouns listed in [7].

- [7] i NOMINATIVE *I he she we they*
 ii ACCUSATIVE *me him her us them*

As subjects of primary-tense clauses, these pronouns have to appear in the nominative case-form, while in object function they appear in the accusative case-form. In a language like Latin, Icelandic, or Tamil, NPs quite generally show a nominative / accusative distinction, but in English it's only a few of the pronouns. Nonetheless, we can use those pronouns to verify the subject of a clause like *The dogs barked at the visitors* by simply asking which form is required when we substitute one of the pronouns:

- [8] i a. *They barked at the visitors.* b. **Them barked at the visitors.*
 ii a. *The dogs barked at them.* b. **The dogs barked at they.*

The dogs can only be replaced by the nominative *they*, and *the visitors* can only be replaced by accusative *them*. This provides evidence that *the dogs* is the subject, and *the visitors* isn't.

Verb Agreement

As we said in §3.1.1, all verbs other than the modal auxiliaries agree with the subject in the present tense, while *be* also shows agreement in the preterite.

- [9] i a. *Pat was fond of the children.* b. *The children were fond of Pat.*
 ii a. *Pat loves the children.* b. *The children love Pat.*

Setting aside some special cases discussed in §5.2.2, this property of determining the form of the verb is another key property of the subject. The verbs underlined in [9] show by their inflectional form that *Pat* (3rd person singular) is subject of the [a] examples, while *the children* (3rd person plural) is subject of the [b] ones.

In clauses where the verb doesn't show agreement, we can again use the test indirectly by changing to a construction where the verb has to agree. *The owner must sign both forms*, for example, where the modal auxiliary *must* doesn't show agreement, can be modified to *The owner has signed both forms*, where *has* agrees, showing that *the owner* is the subject.

Subject–Auxiliary Inversion

In several constructions, including the closed interrogative clauses discussed in §3.2.1, the subject appears after an auxiliary verb. This too enables us to confirm which is the subject. We can see that *Pat* is the subject of the [9a] examples, and *the children* is the subject of the [9b] ones, simply by comparing these clauses with their closed interrogative counterparts:

- [10] i a. *Was Pat fond of the children?* b. *Were the children fond of Pat?*
 ii a. *Does Pat love the children?* b. *Do the children love Pat?*

In [i] we have simply inverted the subject and the auxiliary verb *be*, whereas in [ii], where the declarative contains no auxiliary verb, the interrogative has dummy *do* and this precedes the subject. In either case, the subject ends up in the distinctive post-auxiliary position. (Remember, *be* qualifies as an auxiliary verb precisely because it doesn't take *do* in the closed interrogative.)

4.2.2 Traditional Errors in Defining the Subject

The four criteria for subjecthood just reviewed are very simple and obvious, but they aren't anything like the ones that traditional grammars give. Traditional definitions of 'subject' are based on rather vague intuitions about meaning, and they simply don't work, despite being based in two basically correct observations, namely these:

- In canonical clauses that describe an action, the subject of the clause normally corresponds SEMANTICALLY to the agent who performs the action. So when we say *The manager called the police*, the person referred to by the subject NP *the manager* is the person who performs the action of making the call.
- The subject commonly (though by no means invariably) identifies a topic for the clause, i.e., expressing what the clause is primarily about, and the predicate makes some sort of comment about that topic. For example, *Paris is lovely in the spring*

has *Paris* as the subject, and it is typically interpreted as saying something about Paris; *Spring is a great time to visit Paris* has *spring* as the subject, and it is typically interpreted as saying something about spring.

What's wrong with many definitions of 'subject' in grammars and dictionaries is that they represent a massive over-generalization of the first point. They simply DEFINE the subject as the 'doer of the action' expressed in the verb. Less commonly, the subject may be defined as the part that identifies what the sentence is about – a similarly massive over-generalization of the second point.

The grain of truth in the traditional definitions relates to defining 'subject' at a level general enough to allow comparison of languages. Many languages have a syntactic function in the clause that is often associated with the semantic role known as **agent** (actor, doer, or protagonist), or with the topic, and that function shows other signs of primary syntactic importance in the clause as well (though some languages are organized rather differently, so that things aren't nearly so clear). But in English the correlation between subject and agent, or between subject and topic, is far too complex for the above definitions to work at the LANGUAGE-PARTICULAR level, where we're trying to identify subjects accurately within a language. This point deserves some more detailed discussion.

Subject and Agent

The old-fashioned definition of the subject as the 'doer of the action' expressed in the verb works well enough with a sentence like *We wandered down the street*; but it fails completely with examples like those in [11], where we underline the subjects:

- [11] i She knows French literature really well.
 ii Ernie suffered a heart attack last night.
 iii He underwent a lengthy operation at the hands of a heart surgeon.
 iv My grandmother was attacked by two vicious dogs.

- *She* is the subject of [i], but there's no action. Being acquainted with a body of literature isn't an action: it's a state. Notice that [i] can't be used in answer to a question like *What does she do?*. Since nothing in [i] talks about anyone doing anything, the old-fashioned definition strictly says it has no subject. That's uncontroversially the wrong answer: *she* has all four of the syntactic properties that are the relevant ones for English. It's positioned before the VP, it's in nominative case, it's followed a verb that agrees with it, and it would follow the auxiliary in the corresponding closed interrogative (*Does she know French literature really well?*).
- In [ii] and [iii], we have descriptions of events rather than states, but that still doesn't mean the subject performs an action. Suffering isn't an action that Ernie performed on the heart attack, and undergoing isn't an action that he performed

on the operation (the heart surgeon was the only one who did something!). The referent of the syntactic subject doesn't have a semantic role anything like 'doer of the action' in such cases.

- Example [iv] does describe an action, but the clause is a passive clause (the passive of *Two vicious dogs attacked my grandmother*). The agent role is associated not with the subject, *my grandmother*, but with the NP *two vicious dogs*, which is a complement inside a PP with *by* as its head. Yet it's undeniably *my grandmother* that's the subject in [iv], as shown by the singular agreement (*was*).

In short, agent-based definitions don't define 'subject' in a way that denotes what everyone agrees are subjects. This is because subjects can be associated with a range of roles, depending on the kind of situation described, the choice of verb, and whether the clause is active or passive.

Subject and Topic

It is certainly natural to take the subject of *Paris is lovely in the spring* as expressing what the sentence is about; and when looking at *Spring is a great time to visit Paris* we would definitely be inclined to say that it's about spring. It seems natural that the syntactic term 'subject of a clause' and the semantic idea of 'subject that we're talking about' should match. But other examples show that defining 'subject' as 'topic of the sentence' is hopeless. It doesn't identify the subject NPs in cases like those in [12], or indefinitely many others:

- [12] i *Something is wrong with this disk drive.*
 ii *In space, no one can hear you scream.*
 iii *It's high time these kids were in bed.*
 iv *You should be really careful when handling metallic potassium.*

- In [i], the subject NP is *something*, but *something* doesn't tell us what the topic is. The topic is obviously the disk drive, and the comment is that it has a problem.
- In [ii], the topic is clearly not expressed by the subject, *no one*. The clause is about what it's like in the airless void of space, and if any phrase identifies that topic, it's the preposed adjunct *in space*.
- In [iii], the subject *it* is a pronoun with no identifiable meaning. It doesn't set a topic. In fact, this kind of main clause isn't properly described in terms of a distinction between a topic and a comment at all: not all clauses have topic phrases.
- And [iv] is not about you; it's about the dangers of handling metallic potassium.

Some languages do have grammatical ways of signalling the topic, but English doesn't (at least not in any systematic and reliable way). It certainly doesn't always make topics subjects. Often there's no clear-cut single answer to the question of

what the topic of a clause is: it will depend on the context and the view you take of the utterer's intent.

To sum up, there's nothing like a one-to-one relation either between subject and either agent or topic. The definitions found in traditional grammars and often taught in schools simply don't work. 'Subject' only partially corresponds to semantic concepts like 'doer of the action' or 'topic of the clause', and only in certain very simple instances.

4.3 The Object

4.3.1 Distinctive Syntactic Properties of the Object in English

The object is one of a number of post-head complement types in a VP, typically with the form of an NP. It contrasts with the subject, which is a pre-head external complement in a CLAUSE. Unlike the subject, it's located within the VP, and is not as sharply distinguished from other dependents as the subject is. There are several syntactic properties that make it moderately easy to identify. We can summarize them as follows:

- [13]
- i An object is a complement, so it must be LICENSED by the verb.
 - ii With some verbs, the object is OBLIGATORY.
 - iii The object typically corresponds to the subject of a corresponding PASSIVE clause.
 - iv The object can usually take the form of a PERSONAL PRONOUN, which must be in the accusative case if it is one of those listed in [7].
 - v The basic object position is IMMEDIATELY AFTER THE HEAD VERB.

Consider how these properties distinguish the object NP in [14a] from the adjunct NP in [b]:

- [14]
- | OBJECT NP | ADJUNCT NP | | | | | | |
|---|----------------|---------------------|---------------------|--|-----------|----------------|-------------------|
| a. <table border="1" style="display: inline-table; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="padding: 2px 10px;"><i>Ed</i></td> <td style="padding: 2px 10px;"><i>told</i></td> <td style="padding: 2px 10px;"><i>the manager.</i></td> </tr> </table> | <i>Ed</i> | <i>told</i> | <i>the manager.</i> | b. <table border="1" style="display: inline-table; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="padding: 2px 10px;"><i>Ed</i></td> <td style="padding: 2px 10px;"><i>arrived</i></td> <td style="padding: 2px 10px;"><i>last week.</i></td> </tr> </table> | <i>Ed</i> | <i>arrived</i> | <i>last week.</i> |
| <i>Ed</i> | <i>told</i> | <i>the manager.</i> | | | | | |
| <i>Ed</i> | <i>arrived</i> | <i>last week.</i> | | | | | |

- The object *the manager* is licensed by the transitive verb *tell*: it could not occur with an intransitive verb like *arrive* (**Ed arrived the manager* is ungrammatical). But there are no verbs that grammatically disallow the adjunct *last week*.
- With *tell* it is possible to omit the object, as in *Ed won't tell*, where an object is understood but not expressed, but some verbs are syntactically required to have an object when they occur in a canonical clause: attempting to use verbs like *accost*, *delineate*, *force*, or *resemble* without an object yields ungrammatical results. By contrast, there are no verbs which require that an adjunct like *last week* be present in the clause.

- Example [14a] has an associated passive clause with *the manager* as subject: *The manager was told (by Ed)*. There is, however, no passive counterpart of [b]: **Last week was arrived (by Ed)*.
- *The manager* in [a] can be replaced by an appropriate personal pronoun (*him, her, it, or them*): *Ed told him* or *Ed told her*. No such replacement is possible for *last week* in [b]: **Ed arrived it* is ungrammatical.
- In [a] we can't normally insert anything between the verb and its object, as shown by **Ed told unexpectedly the manager* (instead we get *Ed unexpectedly told the manager* or *Ed told the manager unexpectedly*). There is no such restriction in [b]: *Ed arrived unexpectedly last week*.

4.3.2 Direct and Indirect Objects

There are two subtypes of object: direct and indirect objects. The two kinds may occur together, giving what are known as **ditransitive** clauses, but the indirect object can't occur on its own, and when they co-occur in canonical clauses, the indirect object precedes the direct object:

[15]		S		O ⁱ		O ^d				S		O ⁱ		O ^d
	a.	Sue	gave	Max	the photo.		b.	I	bought	them	new shoes.			

(S = subject, Oⁱ = indirect object, and O^d = direct object.) The traditional labels 'direct' and 'indirect' are based on the idea that in clauses describing an action the referent of the direct object is apparently more directly involved in being acted on in the situation than the referent of the indirect object. In [a], for example, it's the photo that actually changes hands and becomes one of Max's possessions. And in [b] it's the shoes that are directly acted on by being purchased and taken away.

The indirect object is characteristically associated with the semantic role of recipient, as in these examples. But it may have the role of beneficiary (the one for whom something is done), as in *Do me a favour* or *Call me a taxi*, and it may also be interpreted in other ways, not so easy to characterize, as in examples like *This blunder cost us the match*, or *I envy you your good fortune*. Once again, notice that simplistic definitions based on semantic role do not work.

Alternation with a PP Construction

Most (but not all) verbs that license two objects also admit a different construction where there is a direct object and a PP serving in complement function (Comp:PP) headed by *to* or *for*. Compare [15] with [16]:

[16]		S		O ^d		Comp:PP		S		O ^d		Comp:PP
	a.	Sue	gave	the photo	to Max.		b.	We	bought	shoes	for them.	

Although the meanings are the same as in [15], the syntactic structure is different. The PPs *to Max* and *for them* are complements (licensed by *give* and *buy*, respectively), but they are not objects: they don't have the properties summarized in [13iii–v]. In particular, they're not indirect objects.

Phrases like *to Max* and *for them* in [16] are frequently called indirect objects by traditional grammars, but that's just a mistake – another case of the familiar confusion between semantic and syntactic function.

Syntactic Distinction between Direct and Indirect Object

The main syntactic property distinguishing the two kinds of object is position: in ditransitive clauses, where both objects occur within the VP (as they do in canonical ditransitive clauses) the indirect object precedes the direct object. Compare [15] above with the ungrammatical orders **Sue gave the photos Max* and **I bought some shoes them*.

In addition, the direct object readily undergoes fronting in various non-canonical constructions, whereas the indirect object is quite resistant to it. Judgements about the acceptability of clauses with fronted NPs that are understood as if they were indirect objects vary considerably (depending on the construction, the verb, and the speaker making the judgement). But there is no doubt that the acceptability of fronting is generally significantly lower for an indirect object (that is, for an NP that would be an indirect object if it hadn't been fronted) than for direct objects. This can be seen in the following pairs involving four non-canonical constructions:

[17]	FRONTED DIRECT OBJECT	FRONTED INDIRECT OBJECT
i	a. <i>Everything else, she gave me.</i>	b. ⁰ <i>Me, she gave everything else.</i>
ii	a. <i>What did she buy him?</i>	b. <i>*Who did she buy these shoes?</i>
iii	a. <i>He kept the gifts</i> <i>[which she had given him].</i>	b. ⁰ <i>They interviewed everyone</i> <i>[whom she had given gifts].</i>
iv	a. <i>What a lot of work he gave them!</i>	b. <i>*What a lot of them he gave work!</i>

- In [i], we have fronting of a complement: the canonical version is *She gave me everything else*. The [a] version is completely acceptable, the [b] version rare and marginal for many speakers.
- In [ii], we have an open interrogative beginning with an interrogative pronoun. In [a], the word *what* is understood as the direct object (it could be expressed as *She bought him what?*), and in [b], the word *who* is an indirect object (compare with the canonical *She bought Tom these shoes*). The difference in acceptability in this pair is very sharp.
- The bracketed clauses in [iii] are relative clauses (discussed in Chapter 12) beginning with a relative pronoun. *Which* is understood as the direct object (as in the canonical clause *She had given him the gifts*), while *whom* is understood as the

- In [iv], we see a type of construction not mentioned so far. They are **exclamative clauses** (discussed in §10.3), with a fronted exclamative phrase. Again the fronted phrase in [a] is understood as the direct object (note the canonical *He gave them a lot of work*) and the indirect object in [b] (as in *He gave a lot of them work*). This is a case where the ungrammaticality of a fronted indirect object seems particularly clear.

In [3] above we illustrated predicative complements (labelling them ‘PredComp’). These commonly have NP form, and in that case contrast directly with objects (Obj). The [a] and [b] pairs in [18] illustrate the difference:

There is a sharp semantic distinction: the object NPs refer to PARTICIPANTS in the situation. Both [ib] and [iib] involve two people, one referred to by the subject, the other by the object. The predicative NPs, however, do not refer to participants like this. There is only a single person involved in the [a] examples, the one referred to by the subject NP *Stacy*. The predicative complement NP does not refer to another person; it denotes a PROPERTY that is ascribed to Stacy.

A few verbs, mainly in BrE, license an NP functioning as either a PredComp or an Obj, but with differences in meaning. One such verb is *prove*:

[19] S PredComp S Obj

a.

<i>This</i>	<i>proved</i>	<i>a great asset.</i>
-------------	---------------	-----------------------

 b.

<i>This</i>	<i>proved</i>	<i>the theorem.</i>
-------------	---------------	---------------------

Again, the objects denote participants but the predicative complements don't. This is perhaps made clearer by examples that contrast a reference to one PERSON with a reference to two:

- [20] i *I felt a fool standing there all alone.* [a fool = PredComp]
 ii *I felt a fool pushing in front of me in the darkness.* [a fool = O^d]

The obvious meaning of [i] involves just me, feeling like a fool (*felt like a fool* would be the usual way of putting it in AmE); but [ii] refers to two people: me, and the fool I could feel in the darkness pushing to get ahead of me.

4.4.1 Contrasting Predicative Complements with Objects

The two functions PredComp and Obj are distinguished syntactically in a number of ways. We'll look at four of them.

PredComp Can Have the Form of AdjP

Both Obj and PredComp can have the form of an ordinary NP, but only PredComp can also have the form of an adjective phrase (AdjP):

- [21]
- | PredComp | | |
|----------|-----------|---------------------------|
| i a. | <i>He</i> | <i>became a lawyer.</i> |
| ii a. | <i>He</i> | <i>became so anxious.</i> |
- | Obj | | |
|-----|------------|--------------------------|
| b. | <i>He</i> | <i>hired a lawyer.</i> |
| b. | <i>*He</i> | <i>hired so anxious.</i> |

- With *become*, *a lawyer* is a PredComp and hence can be replaced by the AdjP *very anxious*.
- With *hire*, no such replacement is possible because *a lawyer* here is an object – *hire* does not license PredComps.

PredComp Can Have the Form of a Bare Role NP

A bare role NP is a singular NP denoting some kind of role, office, or position which is 'bare' in the sense of lacking the determiner (see §2.5.2) which would elsewhere be required. PredComps can have the form of bare role NPs, but objects can't:

- [22]
- | PredComp | | |
|----------|------------|------------------------------|
| i a. | <i>She</i> | <i>became the treasurer.</i> |
| ii a. | <i>She</i> | <i>became treasurer.</i> |
- | Obj | | |
|-----|-------------|----------------------------|
| b. | <i>She</i> | <i>knew the treasurer.</i> |
| b. | <i>*She</i> | <i>knew treasurer.</i> |

- In [i], both the [a] and [b] examples are fine because an ordinary NP like *the treasurer* can be either a PredComp or an Obj.
- In [ii], *treasurer* is a bare role NP, so it is permitted with *become*, which licenses a PredComp, but not with *know*, which licenses an object.

PredComp Does Not Correspond to Passive Subject

We've already said that an object in an active clause typically corresponds to the subject of the passive clause that has the same meaning. A PredComp shows no such relationship:

- [23]
- | | ACTIVE | PASSIVE |
|----|---|--|
| i | a. <i>Ed insulted a friend of mine.</i> | b. <i>A friend of mine was insulted by Ed.</i> |
| ii | a. <i>Ed became a friend of mine.</i> | b. <i>*A friend of mine was become by Ed.</i> |

- In [ia] *a friend of mine* is an object, and like typical objects it can be subject in a passive clause with the same meaning, [ib].
- But in [iia], *a friend of mine* is a PredComp, and so there is no corresponding passive, as is evident from the ungrammaticality of [iib].

PredComp Can (Marginally) Be a Nominative Pronoun

One additional test involves pronoun-headed NPs after *be* in formal writing: the pronouns listed in [7] can sometimes appear in the nominative case when functioning as a PredComp, unlike objects:

- [24]
- | | PredComp | | Obj | | | | | | | | |
|-----|---|------|-----------------|------|-----------------|----|---|-----|---------|------|-----------------|
| a. | <table border="1" style="display: inline-table; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="padding: 2px 10px;">%It</td> <td style="padding: 2px 10px;">was</td> <td style="padding: 2px 10px;">they</td> <td style="padding: 2px 10px;">who started it.</td> </tr> </table> | %It | was | they | who started it. | b. | <table border="1" style="display: inline-table; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="padding: 2px 10px;">She</td> <td style="padding: 2px 10px;">accused</td> <td style="padding: 2px 10px;">them</td> <td style="padding: 2px 10px;">of starting it.</td> </tr> </table> | She | accused | them | of starting it. |
| %It | was | they | who started it. | | | | | | | | |
| She | accused | them | of starting it. | | | | | | | | |

The point here is not that nominative case is REQUIRED on pronouns in PredComp function: many people would say *It was them who started it*, with an accusative pronoun in PredComp function. The point is merely that nominative for object pronouns (**She accused they of starting it*) is completely impossible.

4.4.2 Subject-Oriented and Object-Oriented PredComps

In the examples given so far the predicative complement relates to the subject. Most predicative complements are of this kind, but there is also a second kind that relates to the object:

- [25]
- | | SUBJECT-ORIENTED PREDCOMP | | OBJECT-ORIENTED PREDCOMP |
|----|--|----|---|
| a. | <i>Ted seems highly untrustworthy.</i> | b. | <i>I consider Wally highly untrustworthy.</i> |

In [a], the PredComp relates to the subject, *Ted*: the property of being highly untrustworthy is ascribed to Ted. In [b], the same property is ascribed to Wally, but in this case *Wally* is a direct object.

4.4.3 Ascriptive and Specifying Uses of the Verb *Be*

There is an important distinction between two uses of the verb *be*. Explaining it will be easier if we introduce the technical term **predicand**. It's a semantic term referring

to what a predicate applies to. Traditional grammars often call it an ‘understood subject’. In a sentence like *Tired of waiting, we got up and left*, the predicand for the predicative adjunct *tired of waiting* (which makes no sense if there is no one for it to apply to) is whatever group of people is referred to as *we*. And in *This made the task quite easy*, the predicand for the predicative complement AdjP *quite easy* is whatever the NP *the task* refers to. Now, the two uses of *be* we need to explain are illustrated in [26]:

- | | | |
|------|--|---|
| [26] | ASCRPTIVE | SPECIFYING |
| i | a. <i>Mike was a loyal party member.</i> | b. <i>The best person for the job was Jane.</i> |
| ii | a. <i>What they gave me was useless.</i> | b. <i>What they gave me was a fountain pen.</i> |

- In the ascriptive construction we have a predicative complement: *a loyal party member* in [ia] and *useless* in [iia]. That predicative complement picks out a property that is ascribed to a predicand. In [ia], the NP *Mike* is the predicand: the property of being a loyal party member is ascribed or attributed to Mike. The sentence doesn’t say who he is or was, it only ascribes party membership and loyalty to him. And in [iia], the predicand for *useless* is the gift they gave me, whatever that was. It ascribes the property of uselessness to that gift, but it doesn’t specify what the gift was.
- The specifying construction has a quite different effect: two entities are claimed to be the same. In [ib], the NP *Jane* actually specifies the identity of the person identified as first-ranked on the scale of how good different people would be in the job: it actually says who that best candidate was – but without saying anything else about her. And in [iib] *a fountain pen* provides the answer to the question “What did they give you?”: the indefinite NP *a fountain pen* identifies a certain writing implement I have in mind, and my sentence asserts that this object is exactly the same object as their gift to me.

Ascriptive/Specifying Ambiguity

The importance of the ascriptive/specifying distinction is shown by the fact that it’s possible for a clause to be ambiguous between ascriptive and specifying uses of *be*. Example [27] illustrates this difference; it has two quite distinct meanings.

- [27] *I thought he was a friend of mine.*

One salient context for an utterance of this sentence would be to report a mistake I made. But it could be a mistake either about his properties or his identity.

- In the first case, *a friend of mine* is ascriptive, with the referent of *he* as predicand: I’d thought of us as having a friendship but he let me down. The mistake I made was in believing he had the properties you expect in a friend.

- In the second case, *a friend of mine* is specifying. The guy looked like my old friend Bob, so I gave him a big hug, and then realized that I was hugging a stranger. My mistake in this case was that I thought he was Bob.

With verbs other than *be*, predicative complements are VIRTUALLY ALWAYS ASCRIPTIVE. Notice, for example, that such verbs as *become* (and at least in BrE, *prove*, *seem*, and *appear*) could replace *be* in the [a] examples of [26], but not in the [b] ones: *Mike became a loyal party member* is understandable, but **The best person for the job became Jane* is not even grammatical. *What they gave me became useless* is a perfectly plausible claim (if it broke as soon as I took it out of the box), but *#What they gave me became a fountain pen* is nonsense, unless we assume trans-formative wizardry.

When we said in the discussion of [18] that predicative complements do not refer to people or other kinds of participant in a situation, we hadn't given any specifying examples yet, and were considering only the ascriptive use of *be*: predicative complements of the specifying type can certainly be referential, as *Jane* in [26ib] clearly is.

Syntactic Differences

The semantic difference illustrated in [26] is reflected in the syntax in various ways. The most important of these concerns the effect of reversing the order of the expressions in subject and predicative complement position. Compare these:

[28]	SPECIFYING	ASCRIPTIVE
i	a. <i>The one they arrested was Max.</i>	b. <i>The next point is more serious.</i>
ii	a. <i>Max was the one they arrested.</i>	b. <i>More serious is the next point.</i>

- When we reverse the order in the specifying construction we change the functions. So while *Max* is predicative complement in [ia], that is not its function in [iia]: there *Max* is subject. This can be demonstrated by applying the closed interrogative test for subjects: the closed interrogative counterpart of [ia] is *Was the one they arrested Max?* while that of [iia] is *Was Max the one they arrested?* – with *Max* now in the distinctive subject position following the auxiliary.
- With the ascriptive construction it is generally impossible or extremely unnatural to reverse the two elements (compare *Sue was treasurer* with **Treasurer was Sue*, or *Ed was anxious* with **Anxious was Ed*). When reversal is acceptable the effect is merely to reorder them, not to change their functions: *more serious* is understood as a predicative complement in the non-canonical [iib], with *the next point* as predicand, just as in the canonical [ib]. That means we can't invert it with the

auxiliary verb to form a closed interrogative, because it's not the subject. That's why **Is more serious the next point?* is ungrammatical.

4.5 Overview of Complementation in VPs

4.5.1 Objects and Predicative Complements

On the basis of the presence or absence of the two kinds of object and two kinds of predicative complement covered in the last two sections we can distinguish five structures for canonical clauses. These are listed in [29] according to two contrasts: whether there are objects (and if so, how many), and whether there are predicative complements. We'll talk about **transitivity** when referring to the presence of objects. An intransitive clause has no objects. We'll say that a clause with one object is **transitive**, and that a clause with two objects (one indirect and one direct) is **ditransitive**. Here are the five most basic canonical clause structures:

[29]	STRUCTURE	EXAMPLE
i	subject + intransitive verb	<i>I trembled.</i>
ii	subject + intransitive verb + predicative complement	<i>She felt happy.</i>
iii	subject + transitive verb + direct object	<i>He sells cars.</i>
iv	subject + transitive verb + direct object + predicative complement	<i>It made me fat.</i>
v	subject + transitive verb + indirect object + direct object	<i>I gave him food.</i>

Terms like 'intransitive' can apply to clause, verb phrase, and verb alike: *I trembled* is an intransitive clause, *trembled* is an intransitive VP, and *tremble* is an intransitive verb. Keep in mind, though, that most verbs occur in more than one of the clause constructions. A very large number occur in both intransitive and transitive clauses (e.g., *eat*, as in *They were eating* and *They were eating fruit*), or in both transitive and ditransitive clauses (e.g., *buy*, as in *We bought some flowers* and *We bought them some flowers*). Some (e.g., *find*) occur in both transitives with a predicative complement like [iv] (as in *She found him attractive*) and ditransitives like [v] (as in *He found her a seat*). And so on. So when the terms are used for verbs, they typically apply to particular **USES** of the verbs.

4.5.2 PP Complements

Our main focus so far has been on complements with the form of NPs and AdjPs, but we should stress that these are not the only forms of complements, and that the list in [29] does not by any means illustrate all the types and combinations of complements in canonical clauses. In the first place we must also allow for complements with the form of PPs, [30–31]:

- [30] i *We asked for an adjournment.* [intransitive]
 ii *He congratulated her on her promotion.* [transitive]
- [31] i *We walked to school.* [intransitive]
 ii *I put the meat in the freezer.* [transitive]

The examples in [30] illustrate the very common construction where a verb selects a specific preposition to head the PP complement: it has to be recorded in the lexicon (the dictionary for the language) that *ask* selects *for* (or various other prepositions, as in *ask about the plans* or *ask after her ailing mother*), that *congratulate* selects *on*, and so on. Although sometimes it can be in doubt whether a PP is a complement or an adjunct, the status of the PPs in [30] as complements is fairly straightforward: they have to be licensed by a verb selecting *for* and *on* respectively. In [30i] the PP is the only complement of the VP, so it's intransitive; in [30ii] there is also an object, *her*, so the VP is transitive.

In [31] the first example is again intransitive and the second transitive, but this time the preposition is not selected by the verb: it has independent meaning involving movement in space. Note that *in the freezer* in [ii] is not omissible: the verb *put* requires a complement of this kind in addition to the object, so the status of the PP as a complement is particularly clear.

We will look further at PP complements in Chapter 7, but we'll just note here that PPs can also function as predicative complements, as in *He was in a bad temper*, or *I regard this as outrageous*, or *It seemed like a good idea* (where *it* is a predicand, not the meaningless dummy *it* found in *It seems that he's out*; see §14.4.1).

4.5.3 Subordinate Clause Complements

A wide variety of constructions license subordinate clauses as complements. Here are some initial examples, the underlined clauses in [32] being tensed, those in [33] tenseless:

- [32] i *They complained that there was no hot water.* [intransitive]
 ii *He informed me that the secretary had resigned.* [transitive]
- [33] i *I hope to see you again soon.* [intransitive]
 ii *This persuaded me to change my tactics.* [transitive]

In each pair of examples, the VP in [i] contains only one internal complement, while the VP of example [ii] also contains a direct object preceding it (in each case *me*). The [i] examples belong to the general category of intransitive clause, while the [ii] examples are transitive. Note that although the subordinate clauses are non-canonical (because they're subordinate, embedded in larger clauses), the larger clauses containing them are here canonical: at the level of the main clauses we simply have a structure consisting of the subject together with the predicate consisting of its verb and complements, just as we have in [29] (see §1.3.1).

These constructions will be dealt with in more detail in the chapters dealing with subordinate clauses: [Chapter 11](#) for finites and [Chapter 14](#) for non-finites.

Exercises on Chapter 4

1. Use the **licensing** criterion (see [§4.1.4](#) and [4.1.5](#)) to determine whether the ten underlined expressions in the examples below are **complements** or **adjuncts**. In the case of complements, cite three verbs that license such a complement, and three that do not.

Example: *Mike called me last night.* *Me* is a complement, more specifically a direct object. The verbs *phone*, *see*, and *visit* take such complements; the verbs *die*, *resign*, and *disappear* don't. *Last night* is an adjunct.

There are ten expressions in all; for reference, they're labelled with small roman numeral subscripts.

They suddenly_[i] ran to the gate_[ii].

I wonder if he'll be safe_[iii] all the time.

I'm keeping the dog_[iv], whatever you say_[v].

You'd better put the cat_[vi] out_[vii] now.

It's always been easy for you_[viii], hasn't it?

They swam in the sea_[ix] even though it was raining_[x].

2. Determine whether the underlined expressions below are objects or **predicative complements**. Give syntactic evidence in support of your answers.
 - i *They arrested a member of the party.*
 - ii *She remained a member of the party.*
 - iii *It looks a bargain to me.*
 - iv *He proposed a bargain to me.*
 - v *They continued the investigation.*
3. In each of the following pairs, pick out the one in which the underlined expression is an **object**. Give syntactic reasons for your answer.
 - i a. We all enjoyed that summer.
b. We all worked that summer.
 - ii a. She fasted a very long time.
b. She wasted a very long time.
 - iii a. It created a positive change.
b. It seemed a positive change.
 - iv a. They made her their leader.
b. They showed her their leader.
 - v a. I lifted 67 kilograms.
b. I weigh 67 kilograms.

4. In the following examples, use either **case** or **agreement** to provide evidence that the underlined expression is the subject.
- i This letter embarrassed the government.
 - ii Sue will lend you her car.
 - iii Everything will be OK.
 - iv It must be the twins he's referring to.
 - v One of the twins took the car.
5. Identify the **subject** in each of the examples below (ignoring the subordinate clause in [iv]). Present the reasoning that tells you it is the subject. Use the syntactic tests that are appropriate, and explain why the other tests are not appropriate.
- i Tomorrow Pat will be back from skiing.
 - ii Is today some kind of holiday?
 - iii Down the road ran the wild dog.
 - iv It isn't the programme that's at fault.
 - v Dan got bitten on the neck by a bat.
6. For which of the following clauses would it be implausible to say that the **subject** identifies 'the doer of an action'? Give reasons for your answer.
- i She's very like her mother.
 - ii The decision was made by my aunt.
 - iii My father closed the door.
 - iv I've just received a letter from the mayor.
 - v She underwent surgery.
7. For which of the following is it implausible to say that the **subject** identifies the **topic**? Give reasons for your answer.
- i At this time of year you're likely to get violent thunderstorms.
 - ii Anyone could make a better job of it than that.
 - iii My sister has just won the marathon.
 - iv Close tabs were kept on all the directors.
 - v Their house is worth a million and a half.
8. For each of the underlined strings, decide whether it contains (a) just a direct object, (b) just a predicative complement, (c) both a direct object and a predicative complement, (d) both a direct and an indirect object, or (e) none of the above.
- i I just found him a fascinating character.
 - ii Can you overcook chilli?
 - iii Doesn't this make you glad?
 - iv Has a wardrobe-related disaster happened to you?

v *He left me a security company and a financial business in the capital city of Accra.*

vi *I want that life.*

vii *I eat like that.*

viii *He's very ostentatious.*

ix *She sleeps with it on or she can't sleep.*

x *I was afraid to run into you.*

9. For each of the verbs below, decide which of the following three structures they can occur in: (a) a structure with two NPs, as in [15]; (b) a structure with one NP and a PP headed by *to*; (c) a structure with one NP and a PP headed by *for*. For each, construct a relevant example to show that you're right. (Don't confuse the preposition *to* with the infinitival marker of the same shape. It's not entirely clear what the infinitival marker is, but it certainly isn't a preposition.)

i *award*

ii *borrow*

iii *envy*

iv *explain*

v *fine*

vi *obtain*

vii *owe*

viii *return*

ix *send*

x *transfer*

10. For each of the following verbs, make up a canonical clause containing it as the head verb, and say whether the clause you've written down is (a) intransitive, (b) intransitive with a predicative complement, (c) transitive, (d) transitive with a predicative complement, or (e) ditransitive.

i *appear*

ii *consider*

iii *judge*

vi *keep*

v *promise*

iv *save*

vii *send*

viii *show*

ix *turn*

x *wish*

11. Use the corresponding-passive-subject test to decide if the underlined phrase is an object or not (see §4.4.1).

- i *It serves as a reminder of how the studio made great hand-drawn animation.*
- ii *They would have to see you as the better player.*
- iii *Oceanographers find sea urchins in waters that span a wide range of pH.*
- iv *You should consider the difference temporary.*
- v *They call this art.*
- vi *Darcy gave me your number.*
- vii *He considers it a sacred duty.*
- viii *She took it a long way.*
- ix *The president of France declared it a global crisis.*
- x *The change lent it an air of majesty.*

12. Explain the ambiguities of the following two sentences. They can each be understood either as having a direct and indirect object or as having an object and a predicative complement:

- i *He called me a nurse.*
- ii *I found her a good lawyer.*

13. Identify the category and function of the underlined phrases. Be as specific as possible.

- i *In recent years, that disruption has been accelerating all on its own.*
- ii *Could you do me a favour?*
- iii *They were strong and successful kings.*
- iv *It was his favourite time in the kitchen, before Javier and everyone else awoke.*
- v *Jane moved forward, smiling, to give him a moment.*
- vi *Many times they are not.*
- vii *He was reaching the end of more than fifty years of teaching there.*
- viii *One guy finally decided it was worth an investment.*
- ix *Their work supplying dental care to needy people in the Middle East has become one powerful antidote.*
- x *The least Aunt Olive could do is heat this mausoleum.*

14. In each case, is the *be* + PredComp construction specifying, ascriptive, or ambiguous? (See §4.4.3.)

- i *Her enthusiasm is unwavering.*
- ii *His story is part of our Breakthroughs series.*
- iii *A major daily newspaper like ours is still the best way to get serious attention for whatever cause or issue matters.*
- iv *The target this time is the Sun.*
- v *This woman is a pro.*
- vi *At the time I was a best-selling author and speaker in America.*

- vii *Even when she suspected the house was empty she would first knock.*
 - viii *I was a good ten years older than them.*
 - ix *Ryan worked every day but his father was the face of the operation.*
 - x *Sandra was the ex-girlfriend of my college buddy, Jake.*
15. In each case, is the underlined **preposition** licensed by the verb? If not, is the PP a complement?
- i *They are amusing to look at.*
 - ii *Why did we go towards the carousel?*
 - iii *Everybody's talking about it.*
 - iv *I was in San Francisco for a legal conference.*
 - v *His hands drift like they are looking for something to pet.*
 - vi *I asked her what she likes to do with her friends.*
 - vii *He used to be in the army, an Airborne Ranger.*
 - viii *It makes you think about being a sheep vs being a wolf.*
 - ix *Arthur would come to my house every week and check on my parents.*
 - x *Get the water and I'll deal with them.*
16. The underlined phrase functions either as a **subject** or an **object**. Replace it with a (different) pronoun and use the **case form** to decide which.
- i *Are your colleagues right?*
 - ii *But would you really trust Caz with your puppy?*
 - iii *Did Jai come to the park for home games?*
 - iv *Do you believe joy can triumph over evil?*
 - v *Had Lery designed them?*
 - vi *How do you choose a caterer?*
 - vii *What are the two of them doing with my stuff?*
 - viii *What do you call your dog?*
 - ix *Who's going to stop that team?*
 - x *Who's there?*
17. Explain how the following non-standard clauses differ from Standard English.
- i **The guys remained facing to the front of the room.*
 - ii **You look like happy together.*
 - iii **There have two kinds of verbs.*
 - iv **My question concerns about the semantics.*
 - v **My teacher makes the lessons are more interesting.*
 - vi **How to say this in English?*
 - vii **It depends of what you mean.*
 - viii **I'm agree with you.*
 - ix **I almost mistake.*
 - x **That seems like nice.*

18. [Supplementary exercise] We have claimed that **direct object** is a type of **object**, which is a type of **complement**, which is a type of **dependent**. In a paragraph or two, justify this classification – or provide an argument against it.
19. [Supplementary exercise] Compared to a linguistic framework that used only categories, what advantages do you see for a framework like ours that uses both categories and functions? What disadvantages do you see?
20. [Supplementary exercise] What meaningful connections can you draw between the content of this chapter and that of [Chapter 3](#)?

5

Nouns and Determinatives

5.1 Introduction

Two important points sharply distinguish our discussion of nouns from what you will find in any traditional grammar.

First, as explained in §2.2.2, our notion of a **noun phrase** (from now on, we will always write NP) does not correspond exactly to any concept in the older tradition of English grammar. An NP is a phrase built around a head noun (or, in some special cases, just a dependent that plays the head role: see §5.7). For many of the statements referring to nouns in traditional grammars (perhaps most), our corresponding statement will refer to NPs instead. Much of this chapter is concerned with the internal structures of NPs and their functions. Keep in mind, though, that because most dependents in NPs are optional, an NP may contain its head noun and nothing else at all: NPs like *who*, *wax*, *chrysanthemums*, *Fiji*, or *me*.

Second (as already noted in §2.5.1), while nearly all traditional grammars treat pronouns as a separate primary lexical category and devote a separate chapter to them, we take pronouns to be just a special subcategory of nouns. That means an NP may consist of a pronoun and nothing else. The NPs in [1] are shown in brackets, and the head nouns are underlined.

- [1] i [The minister] made [several serious mistakes] during [the speech].
 ii [Asia] gave [me] [all the relevant documents] [two weeks] ago.

The subject in [i] is the NP *the minister* (not the noun *minister*), and the object is the NP *several serious mistakes* (not the noun *mistakes*). The subject of [ii] is an NP containing nothing but the head noun *Asia*, and the indirect object is an NP containing just the unaccompanied head noun, the pronoun *me*.

5.1.1 Major Distinctive Properties of Prototypical NPs Function

The main functions in which NPs occur are as shown in [2], where we underline the NP illustrating the function in each case and show some of the structure with brackets:

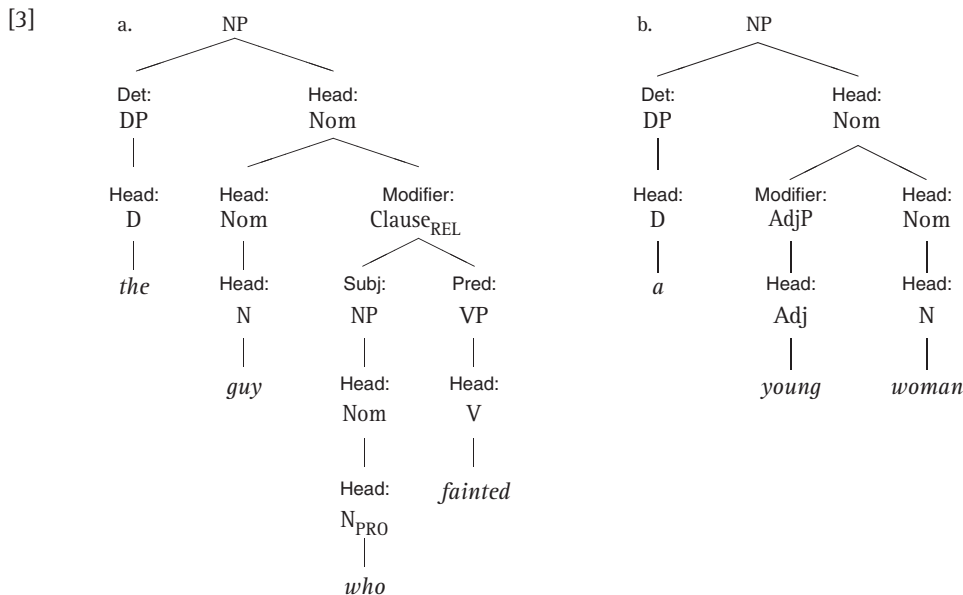
- [2]
- i IN CLAUSE STRUCTURE
 - a. **Subject** [_{NP} The students] were very helpful.
 - b. **Object** They elected [_{NP} a student].
 - c. **Predicative complement** She is [_{NP} a student].
 - ii IN PP STRUCTURE
 - Complement** I was talking [_{PP} to [_{NP} a student]].
 - iii IN NP STRUCTURE
 - Determiner** I was discussing [_{NP} [_{NP} a student's] work].

Some NPs can also function as adjunct in clause structure, as in *I saw him this morning*, though this function is more often filled by adverb phrases, as in *I saw him quite often*, or preposition phrases, as in *I saw him on Sundays* (see §6.2 and Chapters 7 and 8).

NPs in determiner function are always in **genitive** form. In [2iii] the genitive is marked by the affix 's, but most pronoun lexemes have irregular genitives (*my*, *your*, *his*, *her*, etc.).

Form

At this point we need to introduce a slight additional complexity we assume in the structure of NPs. We take them to have a three-level structure: the head noun is inside a phrase called a **nominal**, and the nominal is a phrasal head inside an NP. This parallels the way that a clause typically has a three-level structure: a head verb inside a VP inside a clause. In an NP like *the guy who fainted* or *a young woman*, the nominal excludes the determiner, in the same way that, in a clause, the VP excludes the subject. The structures of these phrases are as shown in detail with no omission of labels in [3]. ('Det' abbreviates the function 'determiner', 'D' is the category 'determinative', and 'Clause_{REL}' is the label for a relative clause.)



Following the terminology introduced for the verb in §4.1, we will say that the nouns *guy* and *woman* are the **lexical heads** of these NPs. We noted in §4.1.3 that we sometimes use the abbreviatory triangle convention to leave out the nodes between the subject NP and a word form such as *who*, but we did not do that here: strictly *who* in [3a] is a nominative pronoun belonging to the category N, and it functions as the head of a nominal which itself is the head of a subject NP, and [3a] shows all that. Evidence for the ‘nominal’ category between NP and noun will be given in §5.3.1 and §5.5 below.

One distinctive property of nouns is their inflection. Nouns typically inflect for **number** (singular or plural) and **case** (plain or genitive):

[4]		SINGULAR	PLURAL
	PLAIN CASE	<i>student</i>	<i>students</i>
	GENITIVE	<i>student's</i>	<i>students'</i>

Nouns also differ from other word categories in the kinds of dependents that occur only or mainly with them:

[5]	i	DETERMINATIVES (OR DPs)	<i>the door, <u>which</u> paper, <u>every</u> boy, <u>hardly any</u> tea</i>
	ii	ADJECTIVES (OR AdjPs)	<i><u>young</u> boys, a <u>big</u> hole, the <u>precise</u> length</i>
	iii	RELATIVE CLAUSES	<i>the guy <u>who</u> <u>fainted</u>, the book <u>which</u> <u>she wrote</u></i>

DPs don't generally appear as dependents in AdjPs (*every boy* is a grammatical NP but **every tall* isn't a grammatical AdjP); AdjPs can't generally be modifiers in AdjPs or PPs (*precise length* but not **precise long* or **precise up the hill*); relative clauses don't function as modifiers in AdjPs (*book which she wrote* but not **interesting which she wrote*); and so on.

Types of Dependent Functions

There are three main types of dependent functions in the structure of the NP and its nominal. We introduce them briefly here, and then deal with them in more detail in §§5.3–5.6.

[6]	i	DETERMINERS	<i>the news, <u>a</u> pear, <u>some</u> cheese, <u>so many</u> new films, <u>absolutely no</u> reason, <u>your</u> jacket</i>
	ii	COMPLEMENTS	<i>repairs <u>to the house</u>, a ban <u>on smoking</u>, the fact <u>that she's alive</u></i>
	iii	MODIFIERS	<i>a <u>young</u> woman, a friend <u>from the Netherlands</u>, people <u>who study fungi</u></i>

- The determiner is a kind of dependent found only in NP structure. In NPs with certain types of singular count noun as their heads, a determiner is normally obligatory. Compare *The door is open* and **Door is open*, or compare *I bought a jacket* and **I bought jacket*.
- Complements in the nominal have to be licensed by the head noun – just as we saw in §4.1 that complements in the VP have to be licensed by the head verb. Our

first two examples involve preposition phrases where the preposition is specifically licensed, selected by the head noun. There is some variation between speakers over this sort of thing, but for most speakers *repair* licenses a *to*-phrase, and *ban* licenses an *on*-phrase. The noun *fact* licenses a clause as complement (*the fact that she's alive*), but the noun *factory* doesn't (so we don't find **the factory that she's alive*). And so on.

- Modifiers are the default type of dependent, lacking the above special features; our examples show the three most common types of modifier in nominals: an AdjP, a PP, and a relative clause. (Relative clauses, introduced briefly in §2.12, differ from the subordinate clause in [ii] in that they can occur with any common noun rather than being licensed by particular nouns.) There is no clear limit to the number of modifiers that can occur in an NP. The three given in [iii], for example, can combine in a single NP: *a young woman from the Netherlands who studies fungi*.

Internal and External Dependents

Some dependents in the structure of the NP are **internal** to the nominal and others, though still in the NP, are **external** to the nominal. The distinction is just like the one we made in §4.1, between internal complements (inside the VP) and external complements (outside the VP). In NP structure, **complements** are internal, and **determiners** are external. All the **modifiers** illustrated so far are internal, but there are also external modifiers. In these examples, underlining marks the dependent and there are brackets around the head nominal:

- [7] i COMPLEMENT (INTERNAL) *a [knowledge of Latin], the [idea that he liked it]*
 ii DETERMINER (EXTERNAL) *any [old papers], some [people I met]*
 iii MODIFIER { INTERNAL *a [big dog], the [book I'm reading]*
 EXTERNAL *almost the [only survivor], even [young people]*

- The underlined complements in [i] are, respectively, a PP and a subordinate clause.
- The determiners in [ii] are both determinatives.
- The internal modifiers in [iii] are, respectively, an adjective phrase and a relative clause, while the underlined external modifiers are both adverbs.

(We mentioned 'determinatives' in [ii] and 'adverbs' in [iii]. It would be more general to say 'determinative phrases' and 'adverb phrases', so as to allow for *almost any old papers*, *not even a young woman*, and so on. Occasionally in this book we won't bother to distinguish between a head word and the one-word phrase it is head of, when the difference is not significant at that point.)

5.1.2 What Nouns Denote

The noun category includes all words denoting physical objects or substances of various kinds (people, animals, places, other inanimate things): *woman, dog, London, apple, water*, etc. However, WE CAN'T USE THIS AS THE CRITERION FOR IDENTIFYING NOUNS IN ENGLISH because there are also large numbers of nouns denoting abstract entities: *absence, debt, fear, love, silence, work*, etc. But it has some use as the basis for a cross-linguistically applicable definition. We can define 'noun' in a way that applies across languages like this:

- [8] **noun:** a grammatically distinct category of words which includes those denoting kinds of physical objects such as persons, animals, and inanimate objects.

5.1.3 Subclasses of Noun

The three major subclasses of noun are **common nouns**, **proper nouns**, and **pronouns**:

- [9] i COMMON NOUNS *cat, day, furniture, activation, fact, truth, perseverance, ...*
 ii PROPER NOUNS *Denzel, Jones, Beethoven, Boston, Canada, Nile, Easter, ...*
 iii PRONOUNS *I, me, my, mine, myself, you, he, she, it, who, what, ...*

- Common nouns are the default subclass, lacking the special properties of proper nouns and pronouns.
- Proper nouns characteristically function as lexical heads of NPs serving as proper names – names individually assigned to particular people, places, festivals, etc. – as in *Beethoven died in 1827*. They also occur, derivatively, in other kinds of NP, for example, *Let's listen to [some Beethoven]*, where the bracketed NP, meaning "some music by Beethoven", is not a proper name (which is why it can take the determinative *some* as its determiner).
- Pronouns constitute a small subclass of the nouns, distinguished from other nouns most clearly by their characteristic inability to combine with determiners (note **the me, *a myself, *this him*, etc.). The most central ones differ inflectionally from other nouns (e.g., in having a contrast between **nominative** and **accusative** forms – *I* vs *me*, *he* vs *him*, etc. – and a *·self* form – *myself, itself*, etc.).

5.2 Number and Countability

Number is the name of the system contrasting **singular** and **plural**. The system applies in the first place to noun inflection: nouns generally have contrasting singular and plural forms. For example, *chair* is the singular form of the noun *chair*, and is used for referring to exactly one instance of a certain type of

object; *chairs* is the plural form, and is used when referring to some quantity other than one. (Plural does not, as traditional grammars always say, indicate more than one: we say *three chairs*, *two chairs*, *one chair*, *no chairs*: for zero we use the plural.)

5.2.1 Count and Non-Count Nouns

Most nouns can occur with the cardinal numerals *one*, *two*, *three*, etc. as determiners: *one chair*, *two chairs*, *three chairs*. These are called **count nouns**. There are also **non-count nouns**, which cannot combine with the cardinal numerals at all: **one furniture*, **two furnitures*, **three furnitures*, and the like are all ungrammatical.

Strictly Non-Count Singular Nouns

Non-count nouns typically appear in their singular forms, and with some this limitation is quite strict. We know what the plural of *furniture* is, in the sense that we know it would be spelled *furnitures*, but it's very rare even without a cardinal numeral, and most occurrences on the web are obvious typing errors or cases of apostrophe omission (*furnitures* where *furniture's* was intended). If we take a pair of semantically similar nouns like *ovation* and *applause* – almost synonymous because they are both used for an exhibition of audience approval – the distinction between *ovation* (a count noun) and *applause* (a strictly non-count noun) is quite sharp:

[10]

	SINGULAR WITH NUMERAL <i>one</i>	PLURAL WITH NUMERALS	SINGULAR WITH <i>the</i>	PLURAL WITH <i>the</i>
COUNT	<i>one ovation</i>	<i>two ovations</i>	<i>the ovation</i>	<i>the ovations</i>
NON-COUNT	<i>*one applause</i>	<i>*two applauses</i>	<i>the applause</i>	<i>*the applauses</i>

Further examples of fairly strict non-count nouns include those in [11] (though some have specialized uses in which they regularly occur in the plural):

- [11] i *clothing, crockery, decisiveness, dross, equipment, footwear, harm, homework, indebtedness, information, lithium, moonlight, nonsense, oxygen, perseverance, publicity, software, sunlight, uranium, ...*
 ii *calisthenics, gymnastics, linguistics, mumps, news, phonetics, physics, ...*

Those in [ii] look like plurals, but the final *s* is not in fact a plural inflection like the suffix *-s* in *chairs*. This is evident from the fact that we say *Linguistics is fun*, not **Linguistics are fun*, and *The news is encouraging*, not **The news are encouraging*; and so on. The words in [11] are like *furniture* in excluding even the numeral *one*: we get *one ovation* but not **one applause*, *one bulletin* but not **one news*, etc.

Strictly Non-Count Plural Nouns

There are also non-count nouns that have only a plural form, not occurring in the singular even without the numeral *one*. Compare the possibilities for the count noun *corpse* and non-count noun *remains*, both used to denote human dead bodies:

[12]

	SINGULAR WITH NUMERAL <i>one</i>	PLURAL WITH NUMERALS	SINGULAR WITH <i>the</i>	PLURAL WITH <i>the</i>
COUNT	<i>one corpse</i>	<i>two corpses</i>	<i>the corpse</i>	<i>the corpses</i>
NON-COUNT	<i>*one remain</i>	<i>*two remains</i>	<i>*the remain</i>	<i>the remains</i>

Other examples of this kind of non-count noun are given in [13]:

- [13] *alms, amends, auspices, belongings, bellows, binoculars, clothes, credentials, genitals, oats, proceeds, scissors, spoils, trousers, ...*

These all contain the plural suffix *-s*, but it cannot be dropped to form a singular noun. *Amend*, *clothe*, and *proceed*, for example, are verbs, not nouns, and similarly *genital* can only be an adjective. In most cases, there is some fairly transparent connection to plurality in the ordinary sense of “more than one”: *belongings* denotes a set of things belonging to someone, *clothes* is a cover term for articles of clothing, while *bellows*, *binoculars*, *scissors*, and *trousers* denote objects with two main parts.

There are also some invariably plural nouns that are not marked by the plural suffix, such as *cattle* and *police*. We get *these cattle*, not **this cattle*; *The police have arrived*, not **The police has arrived*. But these two nouns are not quite so incompatible with numerals: when relatively large numbers are involved, we find *a hundred police*, *several thousand cattle*, etc.

Nouns with Both Count and Non-Count Uses

Nouns that have ONLY a count interpretation or ONLY a non-count interpretation are distinctly in a minority. Most nouns can be used with either kind of interpretation. The [a] and [b] pairs in [14] are fairly typical.

- [14]
- | | COUNT INTERPRETATION | NON-COUNT INTERPRETATION |
|-----|---|---|
| i | a. <i>Would you like a <u>cake</u>?</i> | b. <i>Would you like any more <u>cake</u>?</i> |
| ii | a. <i>We'll have to borrow a <u>football</u>.</i> | b. <i>We're going to play <u>football</u>.</i> |
| iii | a. <i>The <u>cover</u> of this book is torn.</i> | b. <i>The awning provides some <u>cover</u>.</i> |
| iv | a. <i>I suggested a few <u>improvements</u>.</i> | b. <i>There's been little <u>improvement</u>.</i> |
| v | a. <i>I'll have a <u>beer</u>.</i> | b. <i>I like <u>beer</u>.</i> |

What this shows is that when we talk about count and non-count nouns, it might be best to make clear that we mean NOUNS AS USED WITH A COUNT OR NON-COUNT

INTERPRETATION. The underlined words are count nouns in the [a] examples, but non-count nouns in the [b] examples.

The Meaning Distinction between Count and Non-Count

A count noun is used in talking about one or more MEMBERS OF A CLASS OF INDIVIDUAL ENTITIES OF THE SAME KIND. The count noun *chair*, for example, can be used to talk about one or more, perhaps all, members of the class of chairs, as in such NPs as *one chair, several chairs, every chair, all chairs*. An individual member of this class CAN'T BE DIVIDED INTO BITS OF THE EXACTLY SAME KIND AS ITSELF. A chair can be chopped up into bits, but those bits aren't chairs. And if you cut a loaf in half, you don't get two loaves, you get two halves of a loaf.

Non-count nouns characteristically have the opposite property. A good number of them apply to physical substances that CAN BE DIVIDED INTO SMALLER AMOUNTS OF THE SAME KIND. If you cut up some bread, the pieces can still be described by the same non-count noun, *bread*. If you take some wood and cut it into shorter lengths, these can still be referred to individually or in aggregate by means of the non-count noun *wood* – the same noun is applicable to the same stuff in smaller quantities.

Marking of the Count versus Non-Count Distinction

Very often, but by no means always, grammatical features of the NP force or strongly favour either a count or a non-count interpretation.

Plurality Favours the Count Interpretation A plural head noun will generally indicate a count interpretation. In *She described the improvements they had made*, for example, we interpret *improvements* in a count sense like that of [14iva] (*I suggested a few improvements*) rather than the non-count sense of [14ivb] (*There's been little improvement*). That is, it implies a set of separable, individual improvements that you could count. (The non-count plural nouns like *remains* constitute a small number of exceptions.)

Singular Common Noun with No Determiner Favours Non-Count Interpretation In general, common nouns can occur in the singular without a determiner only if they have a non-count interpretation. That's why we get these contrasts:

- | | | |
|------|--|--|
| [15] | COUNT INTERPRETATION | NON-COUNT INTERPRETATION |
| i | a. * <i>She was reading <u>book</u>.</i> | b. <i>She was drinking <u>water</u>.</i> |
| ii | a. * <i>We made <u>chair</u>.</i> | b. <i>We made <u>progress</u>.</i> |

Book and *chair* are almost always interpreted in the count-noun way, so the [a] examples are inadmissible, whereas non-count *water* and *progress* occur readily without a determiner because they're interpreted in a non-count sense. Singular

count nouns are found without determiners only in a very limited range of special syntactic constructions. Two of them are illustrated in the [a] examples in [16]:

- [16] i a. *Who wants to be treasurer?*
 b. **Who wants to be millionaire?*
 ii a. *Try to act like husband and wife.*
 b. **Try to act like husband.*
 iii a. *He swore with hand on heart.*
 b. **He injured hand.*

- *Treasurer*, functioning as predicative complement in [ia], is a bare role NP (a singular NP without a determiner where the head noun denotes some kind of role or office: see §4.4.1). Count nouns generally cannot occur in the singular without a determiner in predicative complement function, as evident from the contrast between *treasurer* and *millionaire* in [i]: *treasurer* applies only to a person holding a certain specific role in an organization, but *millionaire* applies to anyone with net worth of at least a million.
- In [iia] we have a coordination construction ‘X and Y’ where the nouns X and Y are in a special close relation: in such cases the determiner can often be omitted (compare *with pencil and paper*, *neither knife nor fork*, etc.). But the same nouns need determiners when they are not in a coordination, as we see from [iib] – compare *Try to act like a husband*.
- In [iiia] the phrase *with hand on heart* is a special idiom meaning “with his hand on his heart to show sincerity”, but the count noun *hand* in [iiib], having no determiner, makes the sentence ungrammatical.

Certain Determinatives Restricted to One Interpretation Determinatives such as *no*, *the*, *this*, *that*, and *what* occur in determiner function with either type of noun, but in singular NPs the determinatives listed in [17] are restricted to one or the other, as illustrated in [18]:

- [17] i COUNT NOUNS ONLY: *a(n), a few, another, both, each, either, every, few, last, many a(n), neither, next, one, two, three ...*
 ii NON-COUNT ONLY: *a little, enough, little, much, sufficient*
- [18] i a. *Every chair was inspected.* b. **Every furniture was inspected.*
 ii a. **He didn't read much book.* b. *He didn't drink much water.*

(There are sporadic exceptions, like *a love that would not die*, though *love* is normally non-count.)

5.2.2 Subject–Verb Agreement

The system of number is also crucially involved in subject–verb agreement, though it's not the only factor. Compare:

- | | | |
|------|--|--|
| [19] | SINGULAR SUBJECT | PLURAL SUBJECT |
| i | a. <u>The teacher</u> <i>knows</i> about it. | b. <u>The teachers</u> <i>know</i> about it. |
| ii | a. <u>The teacher</u> <i>was</i> late. | b. <u>The teachers</u> <i>were</i> late. |

As we change from a singular subject in [a] to a plural subject in [b] the inflectional form of the verb changes too, and the verb is accordingly said to **agree** with the subject. The agreement applies in the present tense with all verbs except the modal auxiliaries *can*, *may*, *must*, *will*, etc. In the preterite, only the verb *be* displays agreement: other preterites such as *knew* occur in the same form with all kinds of subject (*The teacher knew about it* and *The teachers knew about it*).

Subject–verb agreement involves person as well as number. *Knows* occurs with 3rd person singular subjects and *know* with all others: i.e., plurals, 1st person *I*, or 2nd person *you*. This is why we refer to *knows* as the 3rd person singular present tense form and *agree* (as used here) as the plain present tense form (cf. §3.1.1). Nevertheless, most of the complexities regarding agreement arise with respect to number, and that is why we will now focus on number in more detail. There are four special cases we have to address.

Measure Expressions

Expressions like *ten days*, *twenty dollars*, *five miles*, etc., have plural nouns as heads but the quantity they denote can (sometimes must) be conceptualized semantically as a single abstract entity. This overrides the syntactic plurality of the head noun in determining the form of the verb. So the following examples have plural subjects with a 3rd person singular form of the verb:

- [20] i a. Ten days *is* a long time to be on your own.
 b. Twenty dollars *seems* far too much to pay for a takeaway pizza.
 ii a. That ten days we spent together in Paris *was* unforgettable.
 b. Another three eggs *is* all we need.

Ten days can be seen as a single block of time; twenty dollars is a price; three eggs can be viewed as a single quantity of food. Note that in the [ii] cases the measure expression not only takes a 3rd person singular verb, it even occurs with a determiner that normally selects a singular head (cf. *that day*, *another egg*).

Certain Quantificational Nouns

There are a few nouns expressing quantification which can occur in the singular as the head of an NP whose number for agreement purposes is determined by a smaller NP embedded within it:

- [21]
- | | SINGULAR | PLURAL |
|-----|--|---|
| i | [A <u>lot of money</u>] <u>was</u> wasted. | [A <u>lot of things</u>] <u>were</u> wasted. |
| ii | [The <u>rest of the meat</u>] <u>is</u> over there. | [The <u>rest of the eggs</u>] <u>are</u> over there. |
| iii | (impossible) | [A <u>number of faults</u>] <u>were</u> found. |

The head of the bracketed NP in each case is marked by double underlining. Notice that each head is singular, but the number of the bracketed NP depends on the single-underlined NP embedded within it (as the complement in the *of* PP). This use of *number* (apparently understood as two or greater) forces the embedded NP to be plural, so [iii] (singular) can't be filled.

Collective Nouns

Nouns such as *board*, *committee*, *jury*, *staff*, and *team* are collective nouns in that they denote a collection, or set, of individuals. When they occur in the singular as heads of subject NPs, the subject can be treated for agreement purposes, as either singular or plural – especially in BrE, though AmE tends to favour the singular:

- [22]
- | | SINGULAR INTERPRETATION | PLURAL INTERPRETATION |
|-------|--|---|
| i a. | <u>The committee</u> <u>has</u> interviewed her. | b. ⁰ <u>The committee</u> <u>have</u> interviewed her. |
| ii a. | <u>The jury</u> <u>is</u> still deliberating. | b. ⁰ <u>The jury</u> <u>are</u> still deliberating. |

The plural interpretation focuses on the individuals that make up the collection, on the members of the committee or jury or whatever, rather than on the collection as a unit, the official body that the members constitute.

In some cases, the semantic content of the predicate more or less forces one or other interpretation. Compare, for example:

- [23]
- | | SINGULAR INTERPRETATION | PLURAL INTERPRETATION |
|-------|--|--|
| i a. | <u>The board</u> <u>consists</u> entirely of men. | b. [?] <u>The board</u> <u>consist</u> entirely of men. |
| ii a. | [?] <u>The crew</u> <u>is</u> all over forty. | b. <u>The crew</u> <u>are</u> all over forty. |

In [ia], the property of consisting entirely of men can only apply to the board as a whole; it can't apply to any individual member of the board, so [ib], with a plural interpretation, is ungrammatical, or at the very least a very strange way to put things. In [iib], by contrast, the property of being forty or older can apply only to the individual members of the crew, not the crew as a whole, and the adjunct *all* reinforces the focus on the individuals; so [iib], with its plural agreement is strongly favoured over the very unnatural [iia].

In addition, plural nouns denoting collections of small items that make up a dish can be treated as singular NPs: *Cornflakes is my favourite breakfast*.

Any, No, None, Either, Neither

We also find both singular and plural interpretations of the subject in examples like [24]:

- | | | |
|------|--|--|
| [24] | SINGULAR INTERPRETATION | PLURAL INTERPRETATION |
| i | a. <i>I don't think [<u>any of these keys</u>] <u>is</u> the right one.</i> | b. <i>I don't think [<u>any of these keys</u>] <u>are</u> going to work.</i> |
| ii | a. <i>[<u>None of the copies</u>] <u>was</u> as legible as the original.</i> | b. <i>[<u>None of the copies</u>] <u>were</u> legible enough to be handed out.</i> |

Subjects with *any of* or *none of* may be freely interpreted as either singular or plural for the purposes of verb agreement. Some usage guides disapprove of the plural agreement, but it is unquestionably grammatical and very common.

With *either*, and to a lesser extent with *neither*, the interpretation is usually singular: *I don't think [either of their claims] is valid* and *[Neither of the copies] was damaged*. This correlates with the fact that *either* and *neither* differ syntactically from *any* and *no / none* (*no* occurs with a head noun, *none* is used when there isn't a head noun): they occur only with singular nouns. Both *any objection* and *any objections* are grammatical, and likewise with *no copy* and *no copies*, but **either objections* and **neither copies* are clearly ungrammatical.

When the subject is not an NP, the verb always shows singular agreement: *Under the bed is not a good place to keep your savings*; *That this happened, of course, is mostly your fault*.

5.3 Determiners and Determinatives

The **determiner** function in an NP is usually filled by one or other of two kinds of expression:

- A **determinative phrase (DP)**, consisting of a head determinative either alone or accompanied by a modifier.
- A **genitive noun phrase (NP)**.

Examples, with the determiners underlined, are given in [25]:

- | | |
|------|--|
| [25] | DP: <u>very few</u> new books <u>the</u> city <u>hardly any</u> eggs |
| | GENITIVE NP: <u>the senator's</u> young son <u>Deepak's</u> car <u>your</u> income |

In this section we focus on DPs, especially those consisting of just a determinative. Determiners with the form of genitive NPs are discussed in §5.9.

The determiner is generally an obligatory element with count singular common nouns, as discussed in connection with [14–15] above. Determiners are generally incompatible with pronouns: we get *The committee chose me*, not **The committee chose the me*, and so on. A pronoun usually forms a whole NP by itself. (There are occasional exceptions to this, but they always involve a special meaning for the

pronoun; for example, in *the you that I fell in love with*, the NP *the you* means something like “*the earlier version of you*”.)

5.3.1 Definiteness

Definiteness is a SEMANTIC property of NPs, typically marked by a determiner. A prototypical definite NP, such as *the sun*, has a unique, specific, familiar, identifiable referent, and it has the **definite article** *the* as its determiner. A prototypical indefinite NP like *a unicorn* lacks those properties and has the **indefinite article** *a* as its determiner.

Definite NPs

An NP that conventionally picks out a unique, specific, familiar, identifiable referent in a particular context counts as definite, but a definite NP need not have every one of these properties. We say ‘conventionally’ to allow for the fact that if I say I had lunch with a friend today and you happen to know exactly which friend it was (say, because you saw us through the window of the restaurant), that doesn’t make *a friend* a definite NP. Definiteness has to do with the conventionally assumed possibility of unique identification in context.

In [26] we show the definite NPs in brackets; the part following *the* in each case is the head nominal:

- [26] i [The president of France] has appointed a new prime minister.
 ii Where did you put [the key]?

A speaker’s use of the definite article signals that the speaker is presupposing that the head of the NP will, in the given context, identify the referent.

- Constitutionally, only one person can be president of France at a given time, so using that description in [i] uniquely identifies a particular person, even if you don’t happen to know who that is.
- Although millions of keys exist, I would use [ii] only in a context that makes clear which one I’m talking about (maybe the key to the car that you just asked me to unload, for example).

The existence of definite NPs that conventionally signal that you’re expected to be able to identify the reference does not imply either that you’ll be able to identify the referent (the speaker might be wrong about what you already know), or that you’ll never be able to identify the referent of an indefinite NP (you might guess, and be right).

In a context where *the* is appropriately used with a certain nominal, it will be inappropriate for the addressee to respond with a question consisting of *which* plus that nominal. Responding to [26i] by saying *Which President of France?* would be bizarre: the speaker is presupposing (correctly) that there is only one. And in [ii], my

use of *the key* is appropriate only if I can assume that you won't need to ask me which one. If you have to ask, I should have provided more information. That doesn't mean *the key* is indefinite, or that I should have said *a key* instead; it means I've made a wrong assumption about your state of knowledge.

The unique identification can be more indirect, and it can depend on the meaning of the rest of the sentence or other linguistic context, as these examples illustrate:

- [27] i [The *B-string of my guitar*] broke during a concert.
 ii [The *only language she spoke*] was Albanian.

- By uttering [i] I'm not identifying the specific guitar for you (if I'm playing concerts, I probably own several), nor identifying the concert; but it would still make no sense to ask *Which B-string of your guitar?* – a standard guitar has only one B-string. But given that there was a certain guitar that I was playing, the nominal *B-string of my guitar* can provide a uniquely identifying description: it's the unique B-string of that guitar.
- This limited kind of identifiability figures in [27ii] as well. The nominal *only language she spoke* must pick out a single language, so **Which only language she spoke?* would be nonsensical (in fact it's ungrammatical). But of course, I don't assume that you can name the language, since the whole point of the rest of the sentence is to tell you its name. The head nominal describes a unique entity; at the moment when you hear that nominal you know nothing about it except that it's a language and that she spoke no other; the predicate of the clause then fully identifies it.
- We noted when introducing the category of nominal in §5.1 that the evidence for it would emerge later. We have now seen the first piece of this evidence, for the category of nominal plays a crucial role in our account of definiteness: it is the content of the whole **nominal**, not just the head noun, that provides the identifying description that justifies the use of the definite article in examples like [27i].

Indefinite Article

The indefinite article indicates that the head nominal is not being presented as providing a defining description. The description is not presented as unique in the context. Take these examples:

- [28] i [A cabinet minister] has been arrested.
 ii I'll give you [a key].

- A cabinet contains a number of ministers, and if I don't know (or am not bothering to say) which one of them got arrested, I will use *a* rather than *the*. Here, of course, a *which* question is perfectly appropriate: *Which cabinet minister?* (or *Which one?*) would be a natural response to [i].

- The context for [ii] is likely to be one where we both know which lock I'm talking about, but it will be one for which there are multiple keys, and I haven't decided (or it doesn't matter) which one I'll give you.

Articles with Plural NPs

Article use has been illustrated so far with singular NPs, but of course *the* also occurs in plurals:

- [29] i *[The presidents of France and Italy] will be meeting again tomorrow.*
 ii *Where did you put [the keys]?*

Semantically these are very much like the singulars in [26]: a *which* question about the presidents in response to [i] would be inappropriate, and even with [ii] the question *Which keys?* would suggest that something has gone wrong about our shared knowledge of the situation.

- In [i], the head nominal uniquely defines a set of two people, so the referent is clearly identifiable as that two-member set.
- In [ii], I'm talking about a specific set of keys, and the context is assumed to make clear which set, so you shouldn't need to ask which.

Which Determinatives Are Definite and Indefinite

The main determinatives that mark the NP as definite or as indefinite when they function as determiners are given in [30i] and [30ii].

- [30] i DEFINITE *the*; demonstrative *that*; most uses of *this*; *we* as a determinative; *you* as a determinative; and relative *which*, *whichever*, *what*, and *whatever*
 ii INDEFINITE *a(n)*, *many a(n)*, *another*, *a few*, *a little*, *several*, *many*, *much*, *more*, *most*, *few*, *fewer*, *little*, *less*, *enough*, *sufficient*, *some*, *somebody*, *someone*, *something*, interrogative *which*, *whichever*, *what*, or *whatever*, and *one*, *two*, *three*, *four*, *five*, etc.

Apart from the interrogatives, all the indefinite ones have to do with **quantification**.

This and *that* are unique among the determinatives in that they inflect for number, in agreement with the head noun: *this book* / *these books*; *that day* / *those days*. And *this* has a special colloquial use in which it is indefinite: *I was sitting by myself when this strange man comes up to me*.

5.3.2 Determiner Phrases as Modifiers

The words we classify as **determinatives** most commonly function as heads of DPs in determiner function. (The similarity of the two terms is not accidental. And incidentally, it may help in remembering which is the category and which is the function if you keep in mind that the category names 'adjective' and 'determinative'

both end in *ive*, and the function names ‘modifier’ and ‘determiner’ both end in *er*.) Many DPs, though, are found additionally in other functions, particularly **modifier**. These examples illustrate DPs in both functions:

- | | | |
|------|---|---|
| [31] | DPS AS DETERMINERS | DPS AS MODIFIERS |
| | i a. [<u>The</u> better one] had been sold. | b. I feel [all <u>the</u> better] for my holiday. |
| | ii a. Who's [<u>that</u> tall guy over there]? | b. Nobody should be [<u>that</u> tall]. |
| | iii a. [<u>Very many</u> people] were disgusted. | b. They listed [its <u>very many</u> failings]. |

While the underlined DPs have determiner function in the [a] examples, the ones in the [b] examples are modifiers: in an AdjP in [ib] and [iib], and in an NP in [iiib].

- The bracketed constituents in [ib] and [iib] are AdjPs, and determiner is a possible dependent only in an NP.
- The bracketed constituent in [iiib] is a definite NP, with *its* as its determiner. An NP only ever has one determiner, but the DP *very many* adds quantificational meaning as an internal modifier in the nominal (see §5.5.1).

5.3.3 Determinative Phrases Containing Dependents

A number of quantificational determinatives can head DPs that allow dependents of their own. In most cases the dependents are modifiers preceding the head of the DP. In the following examples, the DPs are in brackets and the modifiers they contain are underlined:

- [32]
- i [Not many] people turned up.
 - ii [Almost every] copy was torn.
 - iii [Some thirty] paintings were stolen.
 - iv There were [at most fifty] applications.
 - v We have [hardly any] milk left.
 - vi I don't need [very much] money.

5.4 Complements in NP Structure

Nominals, like VPs and many phrase types, allow complements as one type of dependent, though nominals without a complement are more common. But one striking difference between nouns and verbs is that NOUNS NEVER LICENSE OBJECTS AS DEPENDENTS within the phrase that they head. For example, the verb *criticize* licenses an NP as the object in *I criticized her decision, but the corresponding noun criticism* does not: **my criticism her decision* is ungrammatical. Instead, we need a complement with the form of a PP. Compare, then, the verb–noun pairs in [33]:

- [33]
- | | VERB + OBJECT | NOUN + PP COMPLEMENT |
|-----|---|---|
| i | a. <i>I criticized <u>her decision</u>.</i> | b. <i>my <u>criticism of her decision</u></i> |
| ii | a. <i>He <u>abandoned his ship</u>.</i> | b. <i>his <u>abandonment of his ship</u></i> |
| iii | a. <i>Bo <u>married Ali</u>.</i> | b. <i>Bo's <u>marriage to Ali</u></i> |

The preposition is usually *of*, as in [ib] and [iib], but some nouns select other prepositions, as in [iiib].

Complements in NP structure are therefore virtually restricted to PPs and subordinate clauses in the head nominal.

5.4.1 PP Complements in Nominals

Dependents with the form of PPs qualify as complements when they are licensed by the particular head noun. The clearest cases have one or more of the following properties.

The Complements Correspond to Subjects or Objects

The object example has been illustrated in [33], while correspondence with a subject is seen in [34]:

- [34]
- | | SUBJECT + PREDICATE | NOUN + PP COMPLEMENT |
|----|--|---|
| i | a. <i><u>The warriors</u> <u>returned</u>.</i> | b. <i>the <u>return of the warriors</u></i> |
| ii | a. <i><u>The premier</u> <u>attacked</u>.</i> | b. <i>an <u>attack by the premier</u></i> |

This type of PP complement can combine with one corresponding to the object in VP structure, as in *the removal of the files by the secretary* – cf. *The secretary removed the files*. An alternative construction has a genitive determiner making essentially the same semantic contribution as the subject makes in a clause, as in *the secretary's removal of the files*.

The Choice of Preposition Is Specified by the Head Noun

Many nouns license complements headed by a particular preposition:

- [35] *their belief [in God], its effect [on the audience], familiarity [with the data], the introduction [to the book], a request [for more staff], secession [from the union]*

The PP Is Obligatory because of the Meaning

- [36] *the advent of the steam engine, the abandonment of sensible budgetary policies, a dearth of new ideas, the feasibility of the proposal, a paucity of reliable data*

The double-underlined nouns in [36] almost always occur with a PP headed by *of*, and even when someone does say something like *What's the feasibility?* we have to understand them as having asked about the feasibility of some particular planned action that was clear from the preceding context.

5.4.2 Subordinate Clause Complements in Nominals

Subordinate clauses may have primary tense or not, and both types are found as complements in nominals:

- [37] i PRIMARY TENSE *the claim that he was ineligible a suspicion that it was a hoax*
 ii NO TENSE *her ability to complete the task his eagerness to redeem himself*

For discussion of these constructions, see the chapters on subordinate clauses, [Chapter 10](#) and [Chapter 13](#).

5.4.3 Indirect Complements

Consider now the following examples, where brackets enclose the NP and underlining marks the complement.

- [38] i *We had to put up with [a longer delay than we had bargained for].*
 ii *He gave [_{NP} so complicated [_{NP} an explanation] that I was completely baffled].*
 iii *It was [_{NP} too serious [_{NP} a problem] for us to ignore].*

We call these **indirect complements** because although they follow the head noun, it is not the head noun that licenses them.

- In [i], the complement is in the nominal but is licensed by the comparative adjective *longer*: if we drop this the nominal becomes ungrammatical (**a delay than we had bargained for*).
- Similarly, in [ii], the complement is licensed by the *so* that modifies *complicated*. This complement is in the larger NP, not in the head nominal: **explanation that I was completely baffled* is not a constituent.
- In [iii], the complement is licensed by *too*, and again, it appears in the larger NP, not the nominal. In this case we could drop *too serious* without loss of grammaticality, but it would have a dramatic effect on the interpretation of the infinitival clause. *A problem for us to ignore* means “a problem that we can/should ignore”, whereas the NP in [iii] means “a problem that was so serious that we could/should NOT ignore it”.

5.5 Internal Modifiers in Nominals

Nominals accept a very wide range of **modifiers**. Some precede the head of the nominal, while others follow. Because they are inside the nominal, they are called **internal modifiers**.

5.5.1 Pre-Head Modifiers

- [39]
- | | | |
|-----|------|---|
| i | ADJP | <i>a <u>long</u> letter, this <u>latest</u> problem, some <u>very</u> irate customers</i> |
| ii | DP | <i>another <u>two</u> candidates, the <u>more than thirty</u> candidates</i> |
| iii | NOM | <i>a <u>brick wall</u>, <u>high octane</u> petrol, a <u>United States</u> warship</i> |
| iv | VP | <i>a <u>sleeping</u> child, the <u>condemned</u> man, a <u>recently discovered</u> fossil</i> |

- The most common type of pre-head modifier is an AdjP, consisting of a head adjective alone or accompanied by its own dependents, as in [39i].
- DPs, again consisting of a head determinative alone or accompanied by dependents, are modifiers when they FOLLOW a determiner rather than functioning as one themselves, as in [ii], where the determiner function is filled by *another* and *the* respectively.
- The modifiers in [iii] are **nominals** consisting of a noun, either alone or (as in the second and third examples) with internal dependents. Note that NPs with their own determiners do not function as pre-head modifiers in nominals: we cannot have, for example, **a the United States warship*. This is the second piece of evidence for recognizing the category of nominal, intermediate between NP and noun, for *high octane* and *United States* in [iii] are clearly not nouns but are also not NPs precisely because they cannot contain a determiner.
- VP modifiers as in [iv] have either a gerund-participle or a past participle form of the verb as head.

Dependents within a pre-head modifier almost always precede the head of that modifier. To take the last phrase in [39iv] as an example, we can say *This fossil was discovered recently* (where *discovered recently* is a complement in the *be* VP), but we cannot refer to it with the phrase **a discovered recently fossil*. We have to place the AdvP-dependent *recently* before the head verb *discovered*, to make the NP *a recently discovered fossil*. This also rules out VPs with complements acting as pre-head modifiers: **a playing Vivaldi quartet*.

5.5.2 Post-Head Modifiers

- [40]
- | | | |
|-----|--------------------|--|
| i | PREPOSITION PHRASE | <i>the tree <u>by the gate</u>; food <u>for thought</u>; a hut <u>in the forest</u>, a man <u>without scruples</u></i> |
| ii | ADJECTIVE PHRASE | <i>people <u>fond of animals</u>; the ones <u>most likely to succeed</u></i> |
| iii | APPOSITIVE NP | <i>the opera <u>'Carmen'</u>; my wife <u>Lucy</u>; our friend <u>the mayor</u></i> |
| iv | NON-APPOSITIVE NP | <i>a woman <u>my age</u>; someone <u>your own size</u>; a rug <u>that colour</u></i> |
| v | TENSED CLAUSE | <i>the guy <u>who spoke first</u>; the knife <u>with which he cut it</u>; the money <u>that you gave me</u>; some people <u>I met on the train</u></i> |
| vi | TENSELESS CLAUSE | <i>the person <u>for you to consult</u>; students <u>living on campus</u>; a letter <u>written by his uncle</u></i> |

- The PPs in [i] are NOT syntactically licensed by the head like those in [33–36] above.

- AdjPs in post-head position usually contain their own dependents, especially post-head ones; the AdjPs shown in [ii] would not be possible before the head noun: you can't say **fond of animals people*, **the most likely to succeed ones*.
- Appositive NP modifiers are distinguished from the non-appositive ones by their ability to stand alone in place of the whole NP. Instead of *They invited my wife Lucy* we could have simply *They invited Lucy* because *my wife* and *Lucy* refer to the same person. There is no such identity of reference in the non-appositive constructions shown in [iv]: *my age* does not have the same reference as *a woman* and hence cannot be substituted for the whole NP *a woman my age*, and so on.
- Tensed clause modifiers are all relative clauses, as shown in [v].
- Infinitival, gerund-participial, or past-participial clauses as in [vi] can also function as modifiers (see §14.3).

5.5.3 Combinations of Modifiers

In principle, any number of modifiers can occur within a single NP. The following examples contain two, three, four, and five respectively:

- [41] i *a big black dog*
 ii *the two French novels we had to study*
 iii *a noted Irish artist with cerebral palsy who learned to paint with his toes*
 iv *that nice little old man at the library with the eye patch*

There are preferences as to relative order, especially among pre-head modifiers. *A big black dog*, for example, will be strongly preferred over *?a black big dog*. Numeral modifiers usually precede adjectives, as in *the three young nurses*, though under restricted conditions the reverse order is found, as in *an enjoyable three hours*.

5.6 External Modifiers

A very restricted range of expressions can function as external modifiers, combining with a whole NP to form a larger NP (see [44] below). They are of two subtypes: predeterminer modifiers, as in *all the other children*, and peripheral modifiers, as in *even a poor man* or *an ensuite bathroom too*.

5.6.1 Predeterminer Modifiers

A predeterminer modifier is not itself a determiner. Nor should it be confused with a modifier in a DP (see §5.3.3). Instead, a predeterminer modifier is a modifier

occurring before the determiner inside an NP. Only a few quantifier expressions and adjective phrases can serve as external modifiers of the predeterminer type. Some examples:

- [42] i all my money, both these books, half his pay, two thirds the amount we needed, twice the cost of his own house, three times its value
 ii such a disaster, what a great idea, too risky a venture, so difficult an assignment, more serious a problem than we had expected

- The underlined external modifiers in [i] are quantificational expressions. *Half*, *two thirds*, *three times*, and so on are themselves NPs. Note that with fractional terms like *two thirds* there is an alternative construction in which the fractional noun is head of the whole NP, with the *of*-PP as complement: *half of his pay*, *two thirds of the amount*. These have a different structure from the examples in [i]: *half his pay* has *pay* as head, and so on.
- The predeterminer modifiers in [ii] occur before the indefinite article *a*. The underlined expressions are not limited to predeterminer modifier function, though: the adjectives *such* and *what* can also occur as internal modifiers when there is no indefinite article (*such flowers*, *what gall*), and comparative adjective phrases like *more serious* can also occur as internal modifiers following the indefinite article (*a more serious problem than we had expected*).

5.6.2 Peripheral Modifiers

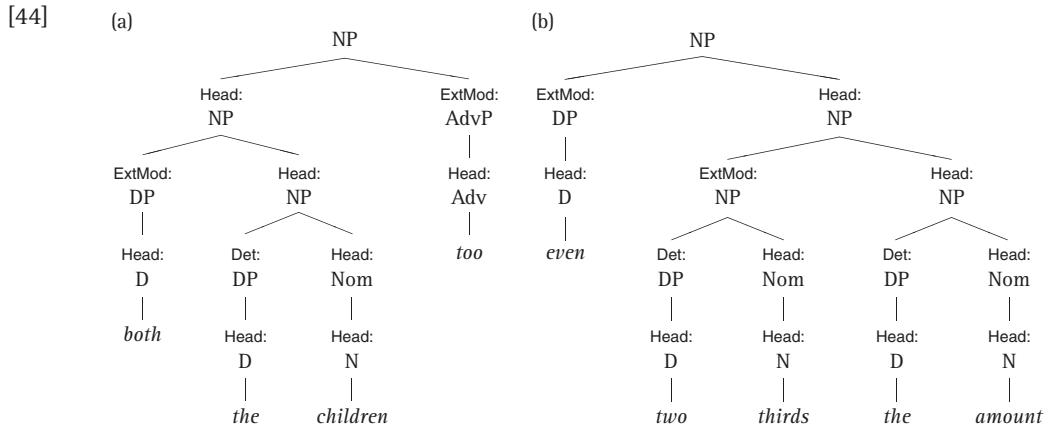
These occur at the extreme periphery of the NP. Those in [43i] are at the beginning of the NP, but those in [ii] show that they can be at the end of the NP instead:

- [43] i even you, only a politician, almost the first time, precisely the one we need, possibly a useful idea, not quite a total loss, hardly a crime, barely an inch
 ii him alone, the boss herself, her brother too, five errors altogether, what exactly

The two types of external modifier may co-occur: even all this lovely food or both your sons themselves.

Notice that *even*, *only*, *almost*, *precisely*, *possibly*, *not*, *quite*, *hardly*, *alone*, *too*, *altogether*, and *exactly* are adverbs. Adverbs DO NOT OCCUR as **internal pre-head** modifiers in nominals, but they do occur as **external** (usually **peripheral**) modifiers of NPs.

In [44] we show the structures for two sample NPs each of which has two external modifiers: *both the children too*, which has a predeterminer instance of *both* as well as the postposed peripheral modifier *too*, and *even two thirds the cost*, which has a pair of stacked fronted peripheral modifiers.



5.7 The Fused-Head Construction

In a few cases the lexical head of an NP and a dependent of that head (usually the determiner or an internal modifier) are combined in a single word. That is, one word functions both as the determiner and the head, or as a modifier and the head, at the same time. We call this the **fused-head** construction. We examine three subtypes (simple, partitive, and special) and then provide more detail about the three kinds of fusion found in English (determiner-head, modifier-head, and compound forms).

5.7.1 Three Kinds of Fused Head

Three semantic subtypes of the fused-head construction are illustrated in [45], where square brackets enclose the NP and underlining marks the head with the fused functions:

- [45]
- | | | | | |
|-----|-----------|----|--|------------|
| i | SIMPLE | a. | <i>Lin has lots of friends; Zoe doesn't have <u>[any]</u>.</i> | |
| | | b. | <i>Is this bag <u>[yours]</u>?</i> | |
| ii | PARTITIVE | a. | <i>I'd love <u>[some of that cake]</u>.</i> | [explicit] |
| | | b. | <i>I took some selfies, but <u>[several]</u> are out of focus.</i> | [implicit] |
| iii | SPECIAL | a. | <i><u>[Many]</u> would disagree with you on that point.</i> | |
| | | b. | <i>I don't think <u>[much]</u> happened while I was away.</i> | |

In each case the underlined word combines the functions of determiner and head.

The Simple Subtype

In the simple subtype the fused-head NP can be expanded into an ordinary NP with a separate head – one that you can retrieve from the context. In [45ia], we could replace *any* by *any friends*. And in [b], we could replace *yours* by *your bag*.

The Partitive Subtype

The partitive is always used to talk about a part of some definite whole.

- In an **explicit** partitive, the fused head is followed by an overt partitive PP complement with a definite NP as its complement – in our example [iia] the complement is *of that cake*. The whole NP *some of that cake* is partitive in the sense that it denotes a part of the whole consisting of that cake: it is understood as “some part of that cake”. Explicit partitive fused heads are always indefinite NPs containing a definite NP. Plural NPs can occur within the partitive PP complement as well: *I’d love [some of those biscuits]*, where the bracketed NP denotes a subset of the entire set of those biscuits. Notice, this can’t be expanded in the way illustrated for the simple type: we cannot say **I’d love some cake of that cake* or **I’d love some biscuits of those biscuits*. (This, incidentally, is one way in which determinatives like *some* are pronouns in cases like [iia], but they’re wrong.)
- In the **implicit** partitive, the *of* complement isn’t overt, but the phrase is understood exactly as if it was there. So in the second example of [45ii], *several* can only be understood as “several of them” (i.e. “several of the selfies I took”). This is different from the simple fused-head construction: *any* in [i] is not understood as “any of them” but simply as “any friends”. Incidentally, the ‘part’ we talk about can be identical with the ‘whole’, as in *I could eat [all of that rice pudding]* or *I have ten photos of her, but [all] are out of focus*.

The Special Subtype

- In [45iiia], *many* is understood as “many people”, a special limitation on the interpretation of fused-head *many*.
- In [45iiib], fused-head *much* has an inanimate, abstract interpretation that isn’t so easy to paraphrase: colloquially you could say it means “much stuff”.

5.7.2 Exceptions to Determiner-Head Fusion

The fused determiner-head construction is widely applicable: almost any constituent that can be a determiner can occur in the fused-head construction. It is found with almost all determinatives (and with genitive NPs in the simple subtype: *I’ve brought my contribution, but not Sarah’s*). Examples with *eight*, *most*, and *this* are given in [46]:

- | | | | |
|------|-----|-----------|---|
| [46] | i | SIMPLE | <i>They sent six units, though I had ordered [eight].</i> |
| | ii | PARTITIVE | <i>They sent twenty units, but [most (of them)] were damaged.</i> |
| | iii | SPECIAL | <i>[This] is infuriating.</i> |

However, certain determinatives are clear exceptions: *a(n)*, *every*, *no*, *the*, and *what* don't permit determiner-head fusion.

The, A(n), Every

These three determinatives have substitutes in fused structures: the definite article is replaced by the appropriate form of *that* (i.e., *that* or *those*); the indefinite article is replaced by *one*; and *every* is replaced by *every one*:

- [47] i a. **The impact of war is more serious than the of drought.*
 b. *The impact of war is more serious than that of drought.*
 ii a. **I need a pen, but I haven't got a.*
 b. *I need a pen, but I haven't got one.*
 iii a. **He inspected a dozen cars, but every (of them) was defective.*
 b. *He inspected a dozen cars, but every one (of them) was defective.*

What

The determinative *what* shouldn't be confused with the pronoun *what*. The determinative functions as the **determiner** the way other determinatives do, while the pronoun functions simply as head of an NP the way other pronouns do:

- [48] i [*What* course] are you taking? [determinative functioning as determiner]
 ii [*What*] do you want? [pronoun functioning as head noun]

The semantic evidence showing that these are distinct is very clear:

- The pronoun *what* is **non-personal**: it never applies to human beings. (For a person, it's obligatory to use personal *who*, as in *Who do you want?*)
- The determinative *what*, by contrast, is **neutral** with respect to the personal/non-personal distinction: in [i] it accompanies a head that doesn't denote a person, but in *What legislators have you talked to?* it accompanies a human head noun. Notice, though, that **What endorsed your book?* is ungrammatical, even though *What academic specialists endorsed your book?* is fine. This tells us that determinative *what* does NOT allow a fused determiner-head structure. *What* is either a determinative functioning as the determiner or a pronoun functioning as the head, and we can tell the difference by checking whether a personal denotation of the NP is possible.

No and Its Variant None

No is different from all the previously discussed determinatives because it has its own special inflected form *none* in the fused-head construction, and the form *no* elsewhere, in the same way that many personal pronouns have distinct dependent and independent genitive forms (e.g., *my* and *mine*; see §5.8.3):

- [49] *Bea had [no money], and Rhys also had [none] at the time.*

5.7.3 Fused Modifier-Heads

Fusion of **modifier** and head of an NP also occurs. You can see it in the following examples, where an adjective functions simultaneously as a modifier and the head:

- [50] i SIMPLE *Should I wear the red shirt or [the blue]?*
 ii PARTITIVE *[The youngest of their children] was still at school.*
 iii SPECIAL a. *[The French] don't take these things too seriously.*
 b. *She became interested in [the occult].*

- In [i], *the blue* can only mean “the blue shirt”.
- In [ii], the reference is to the youngest child among their various children.
- In [iiia], *the French* has the special meaning “French people in general”; and in [iiib], *the occult* means something like “the domain of occult phenomena”.

Modifiers cannot fuse with the head as readily as determiners can. Examples like these are not grammatical:

- [51] i **Kim was hoping for a positive review, but Pat wrote [a highly critical].*
 ii **The mattress is very soft: I'd prefer [a hard].*
 iii **Look through this box of screws and pick out [some small].*
 iv **She became more interested in [the natural].*

Instead of the fused-head construction in cases like these, we use an NP with the noun *one* as head: *a critical one, a hard one, some small ones*. (How to re-express [iv] would depend on the context; *natural phenomena* might work.)

The modifiers which most readily fuse with the head include these:

- **determinatives** used in internal modifier function following a determiner (e.g., *these two*);
- **superlatives** and **comparatives** (*the best; the keenest of you; the taller of them*);
- **ordinal** numeral words and fractions (*He's writing a third; I'll be there on the ninth; They only took three-quarters*);
- certain semantic categories of **adjective**, e.g., colour adjectives as in *the blue* and nationality adjectives that aren't also count nouns, as in *the French, the English, or the Dutch*. (The reason we don't find **The Belgian disagree* seems to be because *Belgian* is a count noun as well as an adjective, which means it looks like a singular count noun with a plural verb, so *The Belgians disagree* is always used instead.)

5.7.4 Compound Forms

In a number of forms the fusion of determiner and head has become a morphological fact: *every, some, any, and no* have formed compound determinatives with nouns like *body, one, and thing*, making words like *everybody, someone, and nothing*. (Both *body* and *one* have the special meaning “person” in these compounds.)

There is a simple syntactic way to tell that the determiner is fused with the head: it is not possible to insert a modifier between them. Adjectival modifiers follow the head instead of appearing in the usual pre-head position. The contrasts between the [a] and [b] cases in [52] show this:

- [52]
- | | FUSED HEAD | SEPARATE HEAD |
|-------|------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| i a. | <u>somebody</u> famous | b. <u>some</u> famous <u>person</u> |
| ii a. | <u>nothing</u> harmful | b. <u>no</u> harmful <u>thing</u> |

Notice that although *no one* is written with a space (so it counts as two words in a word count), our test shows that it's a compound lexeme: instead of **No famous one showed up at the premiere* we find *No one famous showed up at the premiere*.

5.8 Pronouns

The pronouns are a subclass of nouns distinguished syntactically from common nouns and proper nouns by their inability in general to take determiners as dependents: compare *I am worried* with **This I am worried*, or *She likes him* with **The she likes the him*. Nonetheless, pronouns occur as lexical heads of NPs functioning in the main NP positions of subject, object, predicative complement, or complement in a PP. This is why we treat them as a subclass of nouns (not as a separate primary word category the way nearly all traditional grammars do; see §2.5.1). The different kinds of pronouns are illustrated in [53]:

- [53]
- | | | | |
|-----|---------------|---|--|
| i | PERSONAL | <u>I</u> like <u>them</u> . | <u>Your</u> sister underestimates <u>herself</u> . |
| ii | RECIPROCAL | <u>They</u> dislike <u>each other</u> . | <u>We</u> were helping <u>one another</u> . |
| iii | INTERROGATIVE | <u>Who</u> saw <u>them</u> leave? | <u>What</u> do you want? |
| iv | RELATIVE | <u>the guy who</u> helped us | <u>the book which</u> you recommended |

In this section we deal with just the first two types. The others are covered in the chapters that deal with interrogative and relative clauses (see §10.2.5 and §§12.3–12.4).

5.8.1 Deictic and Anaphoric Uses of Pronouns

Most pronouns are characteristically used either **deictically** or **anaphorically**.

Deictic Uses of Pronouns

The term **deixis** applies to the use of expressions in which the meaning can be traced directly to when and where the act of utterance takes place, and who is involved as speaker and addressee. (Remember, as we said in §1.1, in contexts like this our term 'speaker' always applies in an extended sense to authors of written and signed as

well as spoken material, and the same extension applies to ‘utterance’, which should be understood here as applying to writing as well as speech.)

The preposition *here* and the pronoun *today* in their primary meanings are used deictically to refer respectively to the place and day of the act of uttering them. Similarly, *this country* will usually be interpreted deictically as the country where it’s uttered. Several of the pronouns are mostly used deictically: *I* and *we* refer to the speaker and a group including the speaker, and *you* to the addressee(s) or a set including the addressee(s) but not the speaker.

Anaphoric Uses of Pronouns

The term **anaphora** applies to the use of expressions in which the meaning is derived from another expression in the surrounding linguistic material. That other expression is called the **antecedent**. Pronouns in [54] are underlined and their antecedents doubly underlined.

- [54]
- i Alex said she was unavailable.
 - ii The client’s daughter didn’t come to the meeting. Alex said she was unavailable.
 - iii When I last saw her, Alex seemed to be extremely busy.

- In the most obvious interpretation for [i], *she* refers to Alex and does so by virtue of its **anaphoric** relation to the antecedent *Alex* in the main clause.
- That isn’t the only interpretation, though. In [ii], the same sentence occurs in a context where *she* is much more likely to be interpreted as referring not to Alex but rather to the client’s daughter. The antecedent is in an earlier sentence.
- The antecedent usually precedes the pronoun (the Latin prefix *ante-* means “before”), but under certain conditions it can follow, as in [iii].

The traditional term ‘pronoun’ has a Latin origin (like ‘antecedent’), and the meaning suggests it serves for or on behalf of a noun. This is based on the anaphoric use, ignoring the deictic uses; but in addition, it unfortunately suggests that a pronoun is used in place of a noun, which is not right. First, what an anaphoric pronoun intuitively stands in place of is a full NP. In [ii], for example, *she* could be replaced by the antecedent NP (*Alex said the client’s daughter was unavailable*), but not by the head noun (**Alex said daughter was unavailable*). Second, there are meaningless pronouns that don’t stand for any NP, such as the *it* in *It’s amazing the things you can find at the market* (where *it* is singular, so it can’t mean “the things you can find”!). And of course the traditional definition of pronouns as words that stand in place of a noun is hopeless for *I*, *we*, and *you*, which are fully meaningful but aren’t replacements for any nouns or NPs.

The examples of deixis given above included not only pronouns but also other kinds of expression (*this country, here, now, locally, foreign*). It's also true of anaphora that it doesn't only involve pronouns. In *I warned Vlad about that, but the guy wouldn't listen*, the NP *the guy* is anaphorically related to the antecedent *Vlad*.

5.8.2 Personal Pronouns

The prototypical members of the set of personal pronouns are as follows:

[55]		SINGULAR	PLURAL
	1ST PERSON	<i>I</i>	<i>we</i>
	2ND PERSON	<i>you</i>	<i>you</i>
	3RD PERSON	<i>he, she, it</i>	<i>they</i>

The term 'personal' doesn't imply that these pronouns are all used to refer to persons (i.e., sentient beings meriting ethical consideration, such as humans or humanoid aliens; at least, it doesn't mean that here; but see §12.3.1). Clearly, *it* mostly refers to inanimate objects, and *they* often does as well. This subclass of the nouns is called 'personal' because it is the one to which the grammatical distinction of **person** applies.

The Category of Person

- **1st person** indicates reference to the person to whom the utterance should be attributed – who we call the speaker, covering utterers of speech and authors of written material. ('Author' might have been a better choice: if an actor reads your autobiography aloud to make an audio book, the occurrences of *I* and *me* refer to you, not the actor!) The only NPs that are grammatically 1st person are those headed by the pronouns *I* or *we* and NPs with the plural determinative *we* as the determiner (e.g., *We students are anxious*).
- **2nd person** usually indicates reference to the **addressee** (or addressees). The only NPs that are grammatically 2nd person are those that have the pronoun *you* (singular or plural) as head or the determinative *you* as the determiner (as in *You others wait here*).
- **3rd person** is the default, not taken to include the speaker or the addressee and normally excluding them. Apart from the exceptions just given, ALL NPs are 3rd person. Additionally, any non-NP subject is 3rd person (e.g., *That it works was experimentally confirmed*).

There is a semantic hierarchy here that shows up clearly when you consider the meanings of plural pronouns:

- When referring to a set that **INCLUDES THE SPEAKER** (or the joint speakers in cases of petitions, communal prayers, or jointly authored books), the 1st person plural is

used, regardless of whether the addressees are included (as in *Let's leave now so we don't have to rush*) or excluded (as in *We've decided to go without you*).

- When referring to a set that does not include the speaker(s), if it INCLUDES THE ADDRESSEE(S) the 2nd person is used, regardless of whether someone else is included (as in *When your husband gets well you should take a holiday together*) or not (*Will you call me when you get there?*).
- If NEITHER SPEAKER(S) NOR ADDRESSEE(S) are referred to, the 3rd person is used. That means any 3rd person NP will normally be taken to refer solely to someone or something other than the speaker and addressee. (Politicians occasionally refer to themselves by their full name in speeches, but it sounds fairly weird. Very formal writers use expressions like *the writer* for themselves instead of a 1st person pronoun, or *the reader* instead of a 2nd person pronoun; but these are still grammatically 3rd person, as shown by the form of the verb: in an example like *The writer has proved this theorem in unpublished work*, the verb *has* is in the 3rd person singular present tense form.)

The Non-Deictic Use of *You*

There is a secondary, non-deictic, use for 2nd person *you*, almost always unstressed in speech, which does not refer to any particular person(s): *You need to walk carefully when you're my age*, or *You can't do that sort of thing when you're pregnant* (notice, this could be addressed to a man!). Here *you* is used to talk about people generally; it's an informal alternative to the formal-style pronoun *one*, which is a less prototypical member of the personal pronoun category.

Gender

The 3rd person singular pronouns contrast in **gender**, a classification of NPs that in English relates to (i) sex or sexual identity for the choice between 3rd person singular pronouns, and (ii) the person vs non-person distinction in selecting between *who* and *which* in relative clauses (see §12.3.1).

- The **feminine** gender pronoun *she* is used when referring to a person who identifies as female, and for female animals with salient enough characteristics for us to think of them as female (female pets, cows as opposed to bulls; probably not cockroaches, unless you're an entomologist). It is also used for a few conventionally personified inanimates like political entities (*France has recalled her ambassador*) and ships (*May God bless her and all who sail in her*; recall §1.4).
- The **masculine** gender pronoun *he* is used to denote a person who identifies as male, and for the males of animals in which we perceive a sex difference.
- The pronoun *it* is used for all other singulars, sometimes including pets, and even human infants if the sex is unknown or considered irrelevant (Lewis Carroll writes: *The baby grunted again, and Alice looked very anxiously into its face to*

see *what was the matter with it*). The traditional term for the gender of this pronoun would be **neuter**.

Generic Singular Pronoun Denoting a Person

English speakers often need a 3rd person singular pronoun denoting a person with no assumption about sexual or social gender. There is a longstanding solution in the case of pronouns with non-referential antecedents: the lexeme *they*. Conservative usage authorities wrongly deprecate this, but it is well established, even in literary prose (in literature that the critics themselves venerate, and sometimes in their own writing). Some typical examples are given in [56], with pronoun and antecedent underlined.

- [56] i *Nobody in their right mind would do a thing like that.*
 ii *Everyone tells me they think I made the right decision.*
 iii *We need a manager who is reasonably flexible in their approach.*
 iv *In that case she or her brother will have to give up their seat on the board.*

Notice that *they* is always SYNTACTICALLY PLURAL, as the agreement shows ([ii] has *they think*, not **they thinks*), though it is SEMANTICALLY SINGULAR (in [iii] only one manager is being discussed, and in [iv] only one seat on the board is being vacated).

Older usage books insist that the pronoun *he* should be used in such cases, but nearly all speakers today regard this as inappropriate, and they're right. *He* doesn't have the necessary neutrality; it always conveys maleness. Using *his* for *their* in [56iii] would undeniably suggest that the speaker presupposes the new manager will be a man. And it would sound utterly ridiculous in cases like [56iv] (*??She or her brother will have to give up his seat*).

Writers struggling with this problem sometimes try to solve it by using *he or she* disjunctions. But this becomes absurdly cumbersome with repeated occurrences: *??Everyone agreed he or she would bring his or her lunch with him or her*. And it makes related tag questions impossible: **Everyone's here, isn't he or she?* is flatly ungrammatical (an interrogative tag is grammatically required to contain just an auxiliary and a pronoun). Yet **Everyone's here, isn't he?* is even worse. There is only one natural alternative: *Everyone's here, aren't they?*

Semantically singular *they* has been extending its scope in recent decades. It is often used with definite NP antecedents, sidestepping any presumptions about the sex or social gender of the person referred to, as in *You should ask your partner what they think*, or *The person I was with said they hated the film*.

A further remarkably swift change in attitudes regarding the use of *they* has taken place in very recent years. Not only do most newspapers, magazines, and publishing houses now accept it in contexts like those in [55], but early in the twenty-first century many people identifying as 'genderqueer' or 'non-binary' (identifying neither as male nor as female) began to urge its use for making 3rd-person reference to them.

Mainstream news sources have begun to adopt this usage. In the *New York Times*, for example, Dani Blum wrote this about the genderqueer-identified singer Sam Smith: “I’m always fearful that since talking about my gender expression, people won’t listen to this record because of that,” they said. Blum’s underlined pronoun is intended to refer to Smith.

Only a few years before this would have been uncontroversially ungrammatical, but the Merriam-Webster company recognized the new usage in its dictionary entries, and singular *they* was chosen by Merriam-Webster as Word of the Year for 2019. The American Dialect Society picked it as Word of the Decade for 2010–2019. Some people now specify in emails or social media the pronoun they would like to have people use for referring to them. Using the wrong 3rd person pronoun for a person is known as **misgendering**.

Using *they* with singular antecedents raises the question of what to use for the reflexive form. *Everybody enjoyed themselves* seems fine, because the allusion is to a whole group of people; but *?Somebody obviously considers themselves above the law*, with the visibly plural *selves*, sounds slightly odd given that there’s just one person involved but *themselves* has visible plural form. The obvious solution would be the singular form *themselves*. This has a long history in English, but until recently it had remained rather rare. It is coming back, as a search of online news media sites will rapidly show.

Usage Controversy Note

We’ve said that singular *they* is now widely accepted. But you will find it condemned in numerous old-fashioned works on usage that are still in print, so it is worth pointing out that the use of singular *they* with non-referential antecedents like quantifiers (*everyone*, *somebody*, etc.) goes back centuries, and is used by writers of impeccable standing – Chaucer, Shakespeare, Milton, Austen, and huge numbers of others. Even Oscar Wilde’s impeccably pedantic character Lady Bracknell in ‘The Importance of Being Earnest’ uses it when talking about ‘the end of the season when everyone has practically said whatever they had to say’.

Defenders of using *he* as if it were gender-neutral are implicitly allowing an extension in its meaning to cover neutral as well as masculine (social) gender, so it’s somewhat inconsistent that they should condemn an analogous extension in sense for *they* with regard to number, to cover singular as well as plural.

It’s also very surprising that they don’t seem to have noticed how ludicrous it sounds to say something like *??Your father or your mother might injure himself*. And of course switching from using *he* to using *she* solves nothing: *??Your father or your mother might injure herself* sounds just as bizarre.

The truth, then, is that *they* is often neutral as to gender but *he* and *she* never are.

5.8.3 Inflection

The various pronouns have remarkably different inflectional paradigms, considerably more complex than any other nouns. *It* and *one* have just three forms:

[57]

PLAIN	GENITIVE	REFLEXIVE
<i>it</i>	<i>its</i>	<i>itself</i>
<i>one</i>	<i>one's</i>	<i>oneself</i>

The 2nd person pronouns show an additional distinction, between the **dependent** genitive form *your*, used in determiner function before a nominal, and the **independent** genitive form *yours*, used in fused determiner-head function. The singular and plural lexemes differ only in meaning (one addressee or more) and in having distinct reflexive forms:

[58]

PLAIN		GENITIVE	REFLEXIVE	
		DEPENDENT	INDEPENDENT	
<i>you</i>	<i>your</i>	<i>yours</i>	<i>yourself</i>	(singular)
			<i>yourselves</i>	(plural)

Finally, the 1st-person pronouns (*I* and *we*) and the other 3rd-person pronouns (*he*, *she*, and *they*) have more elaborate paradigms, showing a distinction between **nominative** and **accusative** case. It is only these pronouns, plus the interrogative and relative pronoun *who* (§10.2.4; §11.3) that show this distinction. (To say that *dogs* is nominative in *Dogs hate cats* but accusative in *Cats hate dogs* would be a confusion of INFLECTIONAL CASE with GRAMMATICAL FUNCTION.) These pronouns show three other peculiarities: *he* does not have distinct dependent and independent genitive forms; *she* happens to have a dependent genitive that is identical with its accusative; and as noted above, *they* has (for some speakers at least) a singular reflexive form as well as the familiar plural one:

[59]

NOMINATIVE	ACCUSATIVE	GENITIVE		REFLEXIVE
		DEPENDENT	INDEPENDENT	
<i>I</i>	<i>me</i>	<i>my</i>	<i>mine</i>	<i>myself</i>
<i>we</i>	<i>us</i>	<i>our</i>	<i>ours</i>	<i>ourselves</i>
<i>he</i>	<i>him</i>	<i>his</i>		<i>himself</i>
<i>she</i>	<i>her</i>	<i>her</i>	<i>hers</i>	<i>herself</i>
<i>they</i>	<i>them</i>	<i>their</i>	<i>theirs</i>	⁹⁰ <i>themselves</i> (singular)
				<i>themselves</i> (plural)

Reflexive Forms

The reflexive pronouns have two main uses: as anaphoric elements in **complement** function, and an **emphatic** use where they function as **modifier** in clauses or NPs:

[60]	COMPLEMENT USE	EMPHATIC USE
i	a. <u>Sue</u> harmed <u>herself</u> .	b. <u>Sue</u> designed the house <u>herself</u> .
ii	a. <u>Jill</u> was talking to <u>herself</u> .	b. <u>Jill</u> <u>herself</u> admitted it was a mistake.

- In the complement use, the reflexive forms generally contrast with non-reflexive ones: [ia] contrasts with *Sue harmed her*, and so on. In [ia], *Sue* is the antecedent for the pronoun, so the meaning is that the person who got harmed was the same person as the one who caused the harm. In *Sue harmed her*, by contrast, *Sue* cannot be the antecedent; we understand the sentence as meaning that Sue harmed some other female. Complement reflexives occur in a close syntactic relation to the antecedent. In the simplest and most common case, illustrated here, the antecedent is subject of the clause containing the reflexive as a complement in a VP, as in [60ia], or of a preposition, as in [iia].
- One different property of the emphatic use is that only reflexive forms are permitted: **Sue designed the house her* is ungrammatical. In [60ib] the reflexive emphasizes that it was Sue who designed the house, not somebody else, and not Sue with somebody else. In [iib] it emphasizes that Jill made the admission: perhaps she was the one who made the mistake.

There is also a minor use of the reflexive forms, primarily for 1st and 2nd person singular, which uses the reflexive form with non-reflexive semantics. Not everyone uses it. The intention seems to be to convey formality (⁰⁰*Please contact myself or Dave Forsyth*) or politeness (⁰⁰*And for yourself, sir, anything to drink?*).

The Nominative–Accusative Case Contrast

Case in grammar is a distinction between inflectional forms that primarily marks syntactic functions of NPs. In English, though, style level is an important secondary factor in choosing between nominative and accusative forms.

[61]	i	<u>They</u> wrote the editorial.	[subject: nominative case]
	ii	Kim met <u>them</u> in Paris.	[object in VP: accusative case]
	iii	I was talking to <u>them</u> yesterday.	[object in PP: accusative case]
	iv	It was <u>they/them</u> who complained.	[PredComp: either case]

- When a pronoun is the subject of a tensed clause, it appears in its nominative form, and when it's an object (either of a verb as in [ii] or of a preposition as in [iii]) it takes its accusative form.
- The nominative is also found in two other less frequent cases: subjunctive clauses (*It is vital that they not suspect anything*), and in strictly formal style, gerund-

participial adjuncts (*We assigned it to Bradshaw, she being the contract specialist*).

- When the pronoun is a predicative complement, the accusative is normal. The nominative may occasionally be found in constructions of the form *it + be + pronoun*, as in [iv], but this is distinctly formal in style, and the accusative is vastly more frequent (almost to the point of being obligatory) in conversation. In constructions like *The only person who didn't complain was me*, virtually no Standard English speaker would replace *me* by the nominative *I*.

To a very limited extent there is also variation between nominative and accusative in PPs headed by *than*:

- [62] i NORMAL CONVERSATIONAL STYLE: *She's a year younger than me.*
 ii UNUSUALLY FORMAL STYLE: ⁰⁶*She is a year younger than I.*

But again, the nominative in [ii] is unusually formal, so much so that it is a stereotype either for pomposity or for having been born at least a hundred years earlier. The accusative as in [i] is the only normal choice in conversational Standard English.

Case in Coordinations

For many speakers the above rules extend to constructions where the pronoun is coordinated, but there are also many who use special rules for coordinations.

- [63] i a. [*Jim and I*] went to see him. b. ¹[*Jim and me*] went to see him.
 ii a. They invited [*Sandy and me*]. b. ⁰⁶They invited [*Sandy and I*].

The whole coordination is the subject in [63i] and an object in [ii], so in the absence of coordination we would have nominative *I* in [i] (*I went over there*) and accusative *me* in [ii] (*They invited me*). Construction [ib] is definitely non-standard, though commonly heard. The use of *I* after *and* in non-subject coordinate NPs as in [iib] is also extremely common, even among Standard English speakers, but it is a quirk involving just the 1st person singular: we do not find similar uses of nominative *he*, *she*, *we*, or *they*. The extremely common phrase *between you and I* is actually found in Shakespeare (Antonio in 'The Merchant of Venice' writes *all debts are cleared between you and I* in a letter read aloud by his friend Bassanio), but it is between fifteen and twenty times rarer in print than *between you and me*, and the difference has been increasing over recent decades.

Genitive Case

While the nominative-accusative contrast is found only with five personal pronouns, **genitive** case applies to all nouns including the pronouns, so we discuss it in

a separate section below (§5.9). The distinction between **dependent** and **independent** forms of the genitive, however, is restricted to personal pronouns. Compare:

- [64]
- | | DEPENDENT FORM | INDEPENDENT FORM |
|----|--|---|
| i | a. <i>I've lost <u>my</u> key.</i> | b. <i>Everything else is <u>mine</u>.</i> |
| ii | a. <i>He objected to <u>my</u> taking notes.</i> | b. <i>Your proposal is better than <u>mine</u>.</i> |

- The dependent form usually functions in NP structure as the determiner to a following head, as in [ia]. It also occurs as the subject of a gerund-participial clause, as in [iia], in somewhat formal style – the accusative *me* is a more informal variant.
- The independent form occurs as head in NP structure – an ordinary head of an NP in [ib], and a simple fused determiner-head in [iib], where *mine* is understood as “my proposal”.

5.8.4 Reciprocal Pronouns

There are two reciprocal pronouns, *each other* and *one another*. They are written with a space as if they were two words, but the parts are inseparable, and they are best regarded as pronoun lexemes. We can find no difference in meaning between them.

The reciprocal pronouns are similar to the reflexives (in their complement use), in that they have to be in a close syntactic relation to their antecedent. Compare:

- [65]
- | | REFLEXIVES | RECIPROCALLS |
|----|---|---|
| i | a. <i><u>The two men</u> cursed <u>themselves</u>.</i> | b. <i><u>The two men</u> cursed <u>one another</u>.</i> |
| ii | a. <i>*<u>They</u> knew that I'd curse <u>themselves</u>.</i> | b. <i>*<u>They</u> knew that I'd curse <u>each other</u>.</i> |

Most commonly, the antecedent (doubly underlined in [65]) is subject of the clause containing the pronoun, as in [i]. It cannot normally be in a different clause, as shown in [ii]. The problem is not semantic: it is perfectly coherent to imagine that two men might think I would curse them, or that each of them could know that I would curse the other, but [iia] and [iib] do not have these meanings. In other ways as well, reciprocals are allowed under exactly the same conditions as reflexives: *He didn't want to see himself* and *They didn't want to see each other* are grammatical; **He didn't want her to see himself* and **They didn't want her to see each other* are not.

However, the reciprocal pronouns differ from the reflexives in two significant grammatical ways.

- First, reciprocals do not display person agreement with their antecedent.
- Second, reciprocals have genitive forms, as seen in *The two children knew each other's parents*.

5.9 Genitive Case

Leaving aside interrogative and relative *whose*, and the irregular forms for the personal pronouns listed in [57–59], the genitive is marked in writing by 's (as in *dog's*) or by the apostrophe alone (as in *dogs'*).

5.9.1 Genitive Nouns and Genitive NPs

The most frequent use of the genitive 's suffix is illustrated in such examples as these:

- [66] i *[The teacher's car] was stolen.*
 ii *He knew [these people's son].*

The expressions enclosed in brackets are clearly NPs: that in [i] is subject of the clause, while that in [ii] is object. It is important to see that the first structural division within each of these bracketed NPs is between the underlined sequence and the following noun: the structure is *the teacher's* + *car* (not *the* + *teacher's car*), and *these people's* + *son* (not *these* + *people's son*). This is particularly clear in [ii], since plural *these* obviously belongs with plural *people*, not singular *son*. The underlined expressions are themselves NPs: they have the structure of an NP, determiner (*the* / *these*) + head (*teacher's* / *people's*).

In each example, therefore, we have one NP embedded within the structure of a larger one. The lexical head of the larger NP is the final noun, *car* and *son*, while the embedded NP is a dependent: it functions as the determiner, just like the determinatives *a* and *the* in [*A car*] *was stolen* and *He knew [the son]*. We have noted that count singular nouns like *car* and *son* generally can't occur without a determiner: examples like **[Car] was stolen* and **He knew [son]* are clearly ungrammatical. That means the embedded genitive NPs in [66] satisfy the requirement that NPs with *car* and *son* as the head noun must contain a determiner.

The ability of the embedded NPs to function as the determiner within the larger NPs is attributable to the genitive suffix: you can't say **[The teacher car] was stolen* or **He knew [these people son]*. We'll apply the term genitive both to the embedded NPs and to the final word within them: *teacher's* and *people's* are genitive nouns, marked as such by inflection, while *the teacher's* and *these people's* are genitive NPs, marked as such by the genitive noun they end with.

The genitive word within a genitive phrase is usually the head noun, but it does not have to be, as we see from examples like [67]:

- [67] *I met [the Secretary of State's son].*

Here, the head noun of the genitive NP is *Secretary*, not *State's*: the latter is complement in an *of* PP, which introduces a post-head dependent of *Secretary*: I'm talking about the Secretary's son, not the State's son. Nevertheless, a genitive NP

must be marked as such by the FINAL word: **I met [the Secretary's of State son]* is completely ungrammatical.

But the construction illustrated in [67] is highly restricted and relatively rare, especially in writing: the occurrence of post-head dependents in genitive NPs is vastly less frequent than in non-genitives. The post-head dependents are normally very short and generally occur with singular rather than plural head nouns. The most common type has *else* following a compound determinative, as in *someone else's responsibility*. The rest are mostly PPs, with the genitive NP typically making definite reference to some person, as in [67] itself. Relative clauses preceding the genitive suffix are not impossible in conversation (e.g., *the guy I'm living with's parents*), but acceptability drops rapidly with increasing length, so that examples like ??*I met the secretary of the company I worked for last year's son*, though not specifically excluded by the syntax, are distinctly unacceptable and hard to understand.

Genitive Pronouns

The dependent forms of genitive pronouns (*my*, *their*, etc.; recall §5.8.3) likewise serve as heads of genitive NPs functioning as the determiner within a larger NP: *my car* and *their son* are comparable to *the teacher's car* and *these people's son* in [64].

There is a lot of inconsistency in English grammars regarding the dependent genitive forms of pronouns. Some grammars group them with the determinatives, not with the pronouns. Others categorize any items that occur before the noun in an NP as adjectives, so they call *my*, *their*, etc., 'possessive adjectives'. But pronouns are a subclass of nouns, and nouns virtually always have a genitive form. NPs that have pronoun heads can function as subject, object, complement in a PP, or determiner within a larger NP, so we want to treat these cases in parallel ways:

[68]	i	SUBJECT	<i>Bill</i> complained.	<i>I</i> complained.
	ii	OBJECT	They met <i>Bill</i> .	They met <i>me</i> .
	iii	COMPLEMENT IN A PP	They spoke to <i>Bill</i> .	They spoke to <i>me</i> .
	iv	DETERMINER	[<i>Bill's son</i>] arrived.	[<i>My son</i>] arrived.

A grammatical description that grouped *my*, *their*, etc. with the determinatives or adjectives would have to treat the personal pronouns as exceptional, differing from other nouns in that they cannot occur as head noun in genitive NPs functioning as determiners. But pronouns are not exceptional: they have the same functional range as other NPs. The personal pronoun lexemes differ from common and proper noun lexemes in that they have more inflectional forms: we find contrasts between nominative and accusative forms (*I* vs *me*) and between dependent and independent genitives (as in *my* vs *mine*). There is, however, no more reason for assigning *my* and *mine* to different primary word categories than there is for doing so with *I* and *me*.

The one point at which the categories of pronoun and determinative intersect is in the case of NPs like *we soldiers* and *you politicians*. For these, we recognize that just two pronoun lexemes, *we* and plural *you*, have an alternate use as determinatives. *We* has this use not only in the nominative but also in its accusative form (*us kids*). The other personal pronouns do not have any such use: we don't find **They students are lucky*, **You policeman should be ashamed of yourself*, or **They should listen to me scientist*. Where necessary we'll call the determinatives *we_D* and *you_D* and the pronouns *we_P* and *you_P*.

5.9.2 Other Uses of the Genitive

In addition to its primary use in marking the determiner in NP structure, genitive case is also used in the following constructions:

[69]	i	SUBJECT	<i>I didn't like [<u>his</u> being given a second chance].</i>
	ii	FUSED DETERMINER-HEAD	<i>They accepted Kim's proposal but not <u>Pat's</u>.</i>
	iii	COMPLEMENT	<i>The fight was due to a casual remark of <u>Kim's</u>.</i>
	iv	PREDICATIVE COMPLEMENT	<i>Everything in this room is <u>Mary's</u>.</i>
	v	MODIFIER	<i>They've just moved to an <u>old people's</u> home.</i>

- In formal style the **subject of a gerund-participial clause** that is functioning as a complement (of a verb or preposition) appears in genitive case, as in [69i]. In less formal style the subject (if it's a pronoun) appears in accusative case (*I didn't like [him being given a second chance]*).
- Like most other determiners, a genitive can **fuse** with the head, as in [ii], with *Pat's* being understood as "Pat's proposal".
- The meaning of the genitive can be expressed by means of an *of*PP in a post-head complement. This permits an NP with a genitive in it to be indefinite: note the contrast between *a casual remark of Kim's* in [iii], which is marked as indefinite by the article *a*, and *Kim's casual remark*, which is marked as definite by the genitive determiner.
- The **predicative genitive** involves a genitive functioning as predicative complement of a VP headed by *be*, *become*, etc., as in [iv].
- A genitive can also function as an internal modifier in the nominal. In [v], *an* is determiner in the NP with the larger nominal (*old people's home*), not the genitive nominal (*old people's*): the constituent structure is [*an*] [*old people's home*], "a home for old people". This contrasts with the determiner construction *the old people's arrival*, "the arrival of the old people". While the determiner is a genitive NP, a genitive in modifier function is normally a **nominal**, not an NP, just like the internal modifier in *a United States warship* (recall the discussion of [39iii]).

Personal pronouns appear in the independent genitive form in three constructions: fused determiner-head inside an NP in any function (*They accepted your*

proposal but not mine; Mine was rejected), predicative complement (*These books are mine*), and complement in an *of*-PP in one special alternative to the genitive (*She's a friend of mine*).

The distinction between a determiner and a genitive used as a modifier is not always as clear as in the above *old people's home* example, and indeed there may be ambiguity. *The girls' camp*, for example, can be understood either as a camp associated by whoever is referred to as 'the girls' ([*the girls'*] *camp*), or as a camp for girls in general (*the* [*girls' camp*]). The structure expressing the second meaning can have an indefinite article instead: *It's a [girls' camp]*.

With regular plural nouns there is often alternation between a modifier genitive and a plain-case nominal; this form is used in the proper names of some institutions (real examples include the Kauai Writers Conference in Hawaii). It is a Standard English variant, not a mistake due to omitting an apostrophe. This is different from cases of dropping the apostrophe with an irregular plural, as in **mens toiletries*; that's not an established variant in Standard English, but an error, like the practice of inserting an apostrophe in non-genitive plurals (**fresh tomato's*).

5.9.3 The Terms 'Genitive' and 'Possessive'

Throughout this book we use the term *genitive* rather than the one found very frequently in other grammars, namely 'possessive'. The reason is that the suffix 's has only an occasional and often irrelevant association with possession or ownership. It is a purely grammatical element that doesn't regularly signal any particular meaning or class of meanings. *Your socks* will normally refer to socks that belong to you (who shares socks?); but think about the underlined instances of the genitive in these phrases:

- [70] *a homeless person's abject poverty; the winner's reluctance to give an acceptance speech; Germany's invasion of Poland; the Senator's absence from the chamber; her irascible boss; I appreciate your saying so; Josh's friends; Lebanon's misfortune; Meryl Streep's part in the film; Montaigne's infancy; Mozart's birthplace; I'm so sorry for your loss; my formal acceptance of your offer; our having lost track of time; the bodyguard's rapid reaction; the public's anger; their refusal to compromise; the Titanic's disastrous maiden voyage ...*

None of these cases can seriously be connected to possession, unless that notion is stripped of all relation to its ordinary sense. Poverty, reluctance, invasions, absences, bosses, voyages, etc., are not things we possess.

Even when a phrase has a fairly natural interpretation in terms of actual possessing, there are indefinitely many other senses available. *My book* doesn't have to mean the book I own; it can mean the library book I brought with me, or the book

I published last year, or the one I'm planning to write over the coming year, or the one that I'm supposed to report on in class next week.

So in this book we never use the term 'possessive' for NPs bearing the 's suffix on their last word. It's a misleading term that should never have become current among grammarians.

Exercises on Chapter 5

1. The following passage is the opening paragraph of the preface to Steven Pinker's book *The Language Instinct*. Make separate lists of all of the **nouns** and the **NPs**. Don't forget that one NP can occur within another: in a phrase like *I met the father of the bride*, for example, *the bride* is an NP within the larger NP *the father of the bride*, so you would list both *the father of the bride* and *the bride* as NPs.

I have never met a person who is not interested in language. I wrote this book to try to satisfy that curiosity. Language is beginning to submit to that uniquely satisfying kind of understanding that we call science, but the news has been kept a secret.

2. There are a number of nouns that are **plural-only** in some of their senses, but not in all. For example:

PLURAL-ONLY: *YOU SHOULD EAT MORE GREENS.*

ORDINARY: *THOSE GREENS DON'T MATCH THE UPHOLSTERY.*

For each of the first nine of the following, give two examples containing the word in an appropriate context, one where it has its plural-only sense, and one where it is an ordinary plural with a contrasting singular form. For the last item, *people*, give one example where it is a plural-only noun, and one where it is a singular:

- i *arts*
- ii *beginnings*
- iii *brains*
- iv *compliments*
- v *customs*
- vi *holidays*
- vii *letters*
- viii *spectacles*
- ix *spirits*
- x *people*

3. Say whether the underlined nouns in the following examples have a count or a non-count interpretation. In each case construct another example in which the noun has the opposite interpretation.

- i *You needn't have gone into so much detail.*
- ii *I've run out of paper.*
- iii *Can I have another sausage?*
- iv *He has jet-black hair.*
- v *They treat their new help appallingly.*

4. Replace the non-count NPs with count NPs with very similar meanings.

Example: *I still have some fruit. I still have some apples.*

- i *Sleep would be a good idea.*
- ii *Sit down and have some food.*
- iii *It's time for your medicine.*
- iv *We picked up the wood at the hardware store.*
- v *They doubled the bandwidth.*

5. Replace the count NPs with non-count NPs with similar meanings.

- i *Everything he says is lies.*
- ii *I don't have any coins.*
- iii *We threw out the old couch.*
- iv *The children's stories are in this section of the library.*
- v *We ordered a bunch of drinks.*

6. Are the underlined NPs below definite or indefinite? Give reasons for your answer.

- i *Those shoes are filthy.*
- ii *Both copies of the report are missing.*
- iii *I need two copies of your report.*
- iv *Either time would be OK for me.*
- v *We found several big mushrooms.*

7. Assign the following determinatives their appropriate number, according to the tables below, depending on which kind of NPs they appear in. Some should receive more than one number. The words *a* and *that* are already done for you as examples.

<i>a</i>	5	<i>both</i>	<i>little</i>	<i>that</i>	1
<i>a few</i>		<i>each</i>	<i>many</i>	<i>the</i>	
<i>a little</i>		<i>either</i>	<i>much</i>	<i>this</i>	
<i>all</i>		<i>enough</i>	<i>no</i>	<i>what</i>	
<i>another</i>		<i>every</i>	<i>one</i>	<i>which</i>	
<i>any</i>		<i>few</i>	<i>some</i>		

	DEFINITE	
	COUNT NP	NON-COUNT NP
SINGULAR	1	2
PLURAL	3	4

	INDEFINITE	
	COUNT NP	NON-COUNT NP
SINGULAR	5	6
PLURAL	7	8

8. In the following examples give (a) the function within the NP, and (b) the category, of the underlined expressions (there are twenty-five in all; for reference they're labelled with small roman numeral subscripts).

our_[i] friend_[ii]
her_[iii] interest in language_[iv]
the_[v] best_[vi] way
another_[vii] brick_[viii] wall
some_[ix] people who need help_[x]
three_[xi] Canadian_[xii] soldiers
its_[xiii] many_[xiv] virtues
a very useful_[xv] discussion of the problem_[xvi]
a person of impeccable taste_[xvii]
even_[xviii] the director herself_[xix]
several_[xx] things you forgot to say_[xxi]
a Gulf war_[xxii] veteran
that large_[xxiii] a deficit_[xxiv]
a very useful discussion of the problem_[xxv]

9. Give the category of each underlined word. Be as specific as possible. Make a note of any that are ambiguous. Explain your reasoning.
- i *I'll see you later.*
 - ii *I'll see you kids later.*
 - iii *What exactly should one do to fill in the time?*
 - iv *What exactly should one piece cost?*
 - v *Which one do you want?*
 - vi *What kind of results are they likely to get?*
 - vii *What works?*
 - viii *I have to take the dog for a walk.*
 - ix *It was a lot of fun.*
 - x *It was fun.*
10. Classify the fused heads in the following examples as (a) simple; (b) partitive; or (c) special:
- i *Jill has two children and her sister three.*
 - ii *Which of her arguments did you find the most convincing?*

- iii *Thousands of people saw it, and most thought it was first-class.*
 - iv *You've made progress, but much still remains to be done.*
 - v *There were several slices, and as usual Tom took the largest.*
 - vi *The show verges on the obscene.*
 - vii *There are wolves out there; I saw several.*
 - viii *The first letter is P and the second is Q.*
 - ix *The good die young.*
 - x *Many are called but few are chosen.*
11. Select an appropriate case-form of the pronoun *I* for the blank positions in the following examples. If more than one case-form is admissible in Standard English, list them all and comment on the difference between them.
- i *Your father and ____ have been considering this matter.*
 - ii *In the other photo, the guy in the middle of the front row is ____.*
 - iii *They've arranged for you and ____ to meet with Dr Jackson this evening.*
 - iv *They went to the same school as ____.*
 - v *They're seeing Kim before you and ____.*
12. [Supplementary exercise] There are many similarities between NP structure and clause structure. List five, and provide examples.
13. Identify ten transitive verbs that have a corresponding noun (e.g., *run–run, operate–operation*). Write the verb + object and the corresponding noun + complement if possible (e.g., *change the rules, a change in the rules*).
14. Underline the NP that is the antecedent of *one* in each example. Replace *one* with a full NP based on – but not necessarily identical to – the antecedent. (Sometimes, there is more than one interpretation.)
- i *Is this another long email from the auditors? – Yeah. Hartford got one too.*
 - ii *One of the doctors replaced a now-empty bag of blood with a fresh one.*
 - iii *At every moment the fabric is being undone and a new one is woven to replace it.*
 - iv *I would recommend two children instead of one.*
 - v *A great day with my friends was followed by a more ordinary one.*
 - vi *Is it going to be a long, painful season? I can't take another one like last year.*
 - vii *My Kindle screen broke and I had to get another one.*
 - viii *I used Strawberry Creme pudding mix instead of the other one.*
 - ix *He had a small folded piece of paper from the book, and I had a big one.*
 - x *My favorite Helzberg piece is my dainty diamond bracelet. Unfortunately, I lost the first one I owned.*

15. [Supplementary exercise] Which of the following nouns do not take genitive 's?
- i *abyss*
 - ii *cusp*
 - iii *dole*
 - iv *extent*
 - v *fluke*
 - vi *means*
 - vii *omen*
 - viii *sake* (not the Japanese alcoholic drink, the one in *for my sake*)
 - ix *what*
 - x *worth*
16. The following examples contain multiple nominals. Use brackets to show how the nominals are nested.
- i *a radio talk show host*
 - ii *breast cancer awareness month*
 - iii *the employee retirement income security act*
 - iv *the space telescope science institute*
 - v *the health care reform plan analysis*
 - vi *the iron dome missile defense system*
 - vii *the Wall Street Journal editorial page staff*
 - viii *a VHS format analogue video cassette recorder*
 - ix *the European cup championship series title game*
 - x *the youth risk behaviour surveillance system*
17. Explain the difference in meaning between the following PPs where one NP has a determiner and the other is bare. (Note that these are not bare ROLE NPs because they don't denote roles.)
- i *at school* *at the school*
 - ii *in hospital* *in the hospital*
 - iii *by bicycle* *by the bicycle*
 - iv *on call* *on the call*
 - v *at dinner* *at the dinner*
18. In each example, underline the first subject and identify its head, along with the noun controlling verb agreement when one is available.
- i A group of us gets together every Thursday night.
 - ii A number of studies have shown similar results.
 - iii The ham sandwich at table 5 wants his bill.
 - iv A person with two sets of chromosomes is possible but unusual.
 - v Jeans were worn very tight from the late fifties through the late sixties.

- vi *Many believe that the passive voice is used to shade the truth.*
 - vii *The committee are voting on the plan.*
 - viii *The majority, however, remain resolute.*
 - ix *There are a lot of things to consider.*
 - x *There is a lot to do.*
19. [Supplementary exercise] Describe the similarities between count nouns and perfective interpretations of situations on the one hand and non-count nouns and imperfective interpretations of situations on the other.

6

Adjectives and Adverbs

6.1 Adjectives

6.1.1 Distinctive Properties of Prototypical Adjectives

Traditional grammars define adjectives as ‘describing words’, but that is of no use in identifying them: *You’re a star* clearly uses *star* as a descriptive term, but that’s a noun; *She excels* is clearly a descriptive remark too, but *excel* is a verb. What’s more, in *the same place* the word *same* actually is an adjective, but you could hardly say it does any describing.

It would be a bit more accurate to say that in any language that has adjectives (and some don’t), a large proportion of them denote relatively unchanging **properties** of objects, persons, places, etc.: properties relating to merit or quality (*good*, *bad*), size (*big*, *small*), age (*old*, *young*), shape (*round*, *flat*), weight (*heavy*, *light*), colour (*black*, *blue*), and so on. Many denote **gradable** properties, which can apply to a greater or lesser degree. However, this does not offer a criterion for systematically identifying adjectives within English.

To clarify why we posit a category of adjectives, we need to consider their syntactic properties. Within English, the most important of these are their functions, their gradability, and their characteristic modifiers.

Function

Adjectives function as lexical heads of adjective phrases (AdjPs), and AdjPs function both as internal pre-head **modifiers** in nominals and as **predicative complements** in clause structure. An adjective that heads an adjective phrase functioning as internal **modifier** preceding the head noun in a nominal is called an **attributive** adjective; adjectives heading AdjPs in predicative complement function are referred to as **predicative** adjectives.

- [1] i MODIFIER *an old car* *grey hair* *very sad news*
ii COMPLEMENT *The car is old.* *Her hair turned grey.* *The news was very sad.*

Grade

Prototypical adjectives either inflect for **grade**, which means showing a contrast between **plain**, **comparative**, and **superlative** inflectional forms, or else head comparative and superlative AdjPs marked by the modifiers *more* or *most*:

- [2]
- | | PLAIN | COMPARATIVE | SUPERLATIVE |
|----|-------------------------------|--|---|
| i | <i>She is <u>tall</u>.</i> | <i>She is <u>taller</u> than you.</i> | <i>She is the <u>tallest</u> of them all.</i> |
| ii | <i>This is <u>useful</u>.</i> | <i>This is <u>more useful</u> than that.</i> | <i>This is the <u>most useful</u> one.</i> |

Modification

Adjective phrases with the most typical sorts of adjective can be modified by adverb phrases, as in [3] (where the AdvPs are marked by double-underlining):

- [3] *much too risky* *remarkably tall* *extremely useful* to us

6.1.2 Adjectives versus Nouns

We noted that defining adjectives as ‘describing words’ doesn’t work: *Gamblers are fools* and *Gamblers are foolish* both describe gamblers, but only the second does it with an adjective. But given the properties above together with the properties of nouns presented in §5.1, we can distinguish adjectives like *wise*, *big*, and *smooth* from nouns like *genius*, *size*, and *silk* clearly and sharply.

Inflection

Nouns typically show alterations in form (known as **inflections**) signalling **plurality** (reference to some number of entities other than one). Adjectives in English **NEVER** show plural inflection. And many adjectives have **comparative** and **superlative inflected forms**, but no nouns do. So nouns and adjectives contrast as in [4].

- [4]
- | | PLURAL FORMS WITH ·S OR ·ES | SUPERLATIVE FORMS WITH ·EST |
|-----------|------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| i a. N | <i>genius sizes silks</i> | b. <i>*geniusest *sizest *silkest</i> |
| ii a. ADJ | <i>*wises *bigs *smooths</i> | b. <i>wisest biggest smoothest</i> |

Not all nouns have plural forms, though, and not all adjectives have comparative and superlative forms. However, where the forms do exist the difference between nouns and adjectives is particularly clear.

Determiners

Nouns take **determiners** as dependents in the NP; adjectives do not. Some of the determinatives that function as the determiner in NP structure, however, can also function as modifier in an AdjP, so in applying this test we need to select items which cannot modify adjectives. This can be done by picking genitives, or the determinatives *which* and *some*, as in [5], where we see that these can combine with a noun but not an adjective:

- [5]
- | | | | |
|--------|----------------------------|-----------------------|----------------------------|
| i N | <u><i>which genius</i></u> | <u><i>my size</i></u> | <u><i>some silk</i></u> |
| ii ADJ | <u><i>*which wise</i></u> | <u><i>*my big</i></u> | <u><i>*some smooth</i></u> |

Modifiers

NPs and AdjPs take different kinds of **modifiers**. Most importantly, in nominals we find AdjP modifiers, whereas in prototypical AdjPs we find AdvPs. Conversely, AdvPs do not function as pre-head modifiers in nominals, while AdjPs do not normally function as modifiers to other adjectives in AdjPs. To show this we can use the huge numbers of adjective-adverb pairs that differ just by the presence of the suffix *·ly* on the adverb, as in *remarkable* vs *remarkably*. In those cases, it is the word without the *·ly* that modifies a following noun, and the one with *·ly* that modifies a following adjective, as the examples in [6] show:

- [6] i N *a remarkable genius* *its incredible size* *this wonderful silk*
 ii ADJ *remarkably wise* *incredibly big* *wonderfully smooth*

Switching adjectives and adverbs makes ungrammatical phrases in every case: **a remarkably genius*, **remarkable wise*, etc.

Function

The attributive and predicative uses of AdjPs do not provide a good test for distinguishing them from nouns because nominals can also function as attributive modifiers and NPs can function as predicative complements. But there is a function-based test that separates nouns from adjectives fairly well: the ability of nouns to head phrases in **subject** and **object** position. We illustrate in [7].

- [7] SUBJECT SUBJECT OBJECT
 i N *The genius agreed.* *Size is irrelevant.* *They sell silk.*
 ii ADJ **Wise agreed.* **Big is irrelevant.* **They sell smooth.*

Overlap between the Categories

These are sharp syntactic differences. But we have to remember that many words have related lexemes in both categories. The spelling *flat* could represent the BrE counterpart of AmE *apartment* (we could call that one *flat_N*) or the adjective denoting the property of being level rather than convex or bumpy (the adjective lexeme *flat_{ADJ}*). Similarly we need to posit *cold_N* and *cold_{ADJ}*, *green_N* and *green_{ADJ}*, *light_N* and *light_{ADJ}*, and scores of others. In such cases we find positive evidence of both adjective and noun behaviours:

- [8] ADJECTIVE NOUN
 i INFLECTION *flat, flatter, flattest* *flat, flats, flat's, flats'*
 ii DETERMINERS *the flat; my flat; which flat*
 iii MODIFIERS *extremely flat* *a pleasant flat*
 iv FUNCTION *The flat was nice. We liked the flat.*

- The adjective has comparative and superlative forms while the noun has plural and genitive forms.
- The NP takes a determiner as a dependent.
- The modifier contrast is evident in [iii], with the AdjP taking an adverb as modifier and the nominal taking an adjective.
- The noun occurs as head of a phrase in subject or object function.

The Fused Modifier-Head Construction

One complication in distinguishing between adjectives and nouns is that a limited range of adjectives can appear as **fused modifier-head** in an NP, as described in §5.7. Some examples are given in [9].

- [9] i SIMPLE *The first version wasn't very good but [the second] was fine.*
 ii PARTITIVE *I couldn't afford [even the cheapest of them].*
 iii SPECIAL *This tax cut will mainly benefit [the rich].*

The underlined words might at first glance be thought to be nouns: they seem to be in head position in NP structure. But they're not nouns: they're adjectives. In the **simple** and **partitive** constructions this is fairly easy to see:

- Note the possibility of adding a repetition of the noun *version* in [i]: *but the second version was fine*.
- In [ii], we have a superlative form, *cheapest*, which gives inflectional evidence that it can't be a noun.

Less obvious, however, is the **special** construction in [iii] with its restricted interpretation (definite, plural, and personal). In most cases, nevertheless, the form in the special construction can be clearly identified as an adjective.

- This is shown first of all by the modifier test: *the very rich* provides evidence that *rich* is an adjective, not a noun, because it's preceded by a modifying ADVERB. Nouns don't take *very* in its degree sense as modifier. If we refer to rich people using a noun like *plutocrats*, we get an adjective modifier, as in *This tax cut will mainly benefit cynical plutocrats*, not an adverb as in **This tax cut will mainly benefit very plutocrats*.
- Second, in a special fused modifier-head use like [iii], the only determiner permitted is the definite article – a rich person can't be referred to as **a rich*, and *Some rich guy bought it* contrasts with **Some rich bought it*.
- Third, although the NP *the rich* is syntactically plural (hence the verb agreement in *The extremely rich are the beneficiaries*), it doesn't have plural inflection on *rich*: two rich people can't be referred to as **the two riches*.

So, all the evidence says that *rich* in [9iii] is an adjective, not a noun.

6.1.3 Adjectives versus Verbs

We noted above that verbs can be used to describe: *This stuff stinks* describes the stuff just as well as *This stuff is stinky*. But the properties given in §6.1.1, together with those presented for the verb in §3.1, enable us to distinguish adjectives from verbs in a similar way. We'll apply a selection of the most decisive properties to distinguish adjectives like *fond*, *sad*, and *pensive* from verbs like *seem*, *rely*, and *admit*.

Inflection and Grade

Verbs have a richer system of inflection than any of the other lexical categories, with preterite and 3rd person singular present tense forms. Adjectives have comparative and superlative inflection, but verbs don't. We illustrate this inflectional difference between adjectives and verbs in [10], where preterite forms are found only with verbs and comparative forms only with adjectives:

- [10] i V a. *seemed* *relied* *admitted* b. **seemer* **relier* **admitter*
 ii ADJ a. **fonded* **sadded* **pensived* b. *fonder* *sadder* n/a

The asterisks in [ib] mark impossible comparative forms. The comparative inflectional form for *pensive* does not exist, because like the majority of the less basic adjectives, it doesn't take grade inflection (no adjectives ending in *-ive* take it: **appreciativer*, **invasiver*, **talkativer*); however, even with *pensive* we can use the comparative degree-marking adverb *more*. That suffices to distinguish it from a verb, because *more* precedes adjectives but follows verbs:

- [11] i WITH VERB **He more ruminated.* *He ruminated more.*
 ii WITH ADJECTIVE *He was more pensive.* **He was pensive more.*

If the verb has a complement, *more* follows those too: we get *I like it more*, not **I more like it* or **I like more it*.

Modifiers

VPs do take many of the same modifiers as AdjPs: compare *I loved her intensely* and *I was intensely fond of her*. Nevertheless, there are some adverbs that can modify AdjPs but not VPs. They include *very* in its most frequent use (not the much rarer adjective use meaning "exact" as in *That's the very thing we need*); *pretty* in the sense "fairly"; and *too* when it means "excessively". In the examples in [12] we put the subscript 'x' on *too* to make it clear that we mean it in the "excessively" sense (not the "additionally" sense):

- [12] i V **I very love you.* **He pretty regrets it.* **They shout too_x.*
 ii V **I love you very.* **He regrets it pretty.* **They too_x shout.*
 iii ADJ *I'm very fond of you.* *He's pretty sad.* *They're too_x noisy.*

We aren't saying that all adjectives are semantically compatible with degree modifiers like *very*, *too*, and *pretty*. In order to take such modifiers, an adjective has to denote a scalar property, one for which there is a scale measuring the degree to which it holds (i.e., it has to be a **gradable** adjective). For those, the degree modification seen in [12iii] provides a very clear indication of their status as adjectives as opposed to verbs.

Function

The most obvious difference between verbs and adjectives is that verbs function as head of a VP in clause structure and adjectives don't. The second most obvious is that AdjPs function as predicative complement in a VP with a head such as *be*, *become*, *seem*, etc.

- [13] i V *She loves you.* *We regret it.* *You enjoy it.*
 ii ADJ *They are fond of you.* *We became sad.* *You seem appreciative.*

The head of the VP in each case in [ii] is the double-underlined verb, not the single-underlined adjective.

Overlap between the Categories

Again, we need to bear in mind that there are some items that belong to both categories. *Tame*, for example, is a verb in *We tame them* but an adjective in *They are tame*. In pairs like this, where the adjective is identical with the plain form and plain present tense of the verb, it is very easy to distinguish between them in terms of the above criteria.

- The verb has the preterite form, as in *We tamed them*, and the 3rd person singular present tense form, as in *She tames them*. And the verb can't take *very* as modifier: **We very tame them* or **We tame them very*.
- The adjective has the comparative form *tamer* and the superlative *tamest*: *This one is tamer than that one*; *This one is the tamest of them all*. And it can be modified by *very*: *They are very tame*.

When the verb form involved is a gerund-participle or past participle form, things are not so obvious, because these verb forms can occur after *be* in the progressive and passive constructions. That means there can be ambiguity between verb and adjective interpretations, as in [14]:

- [14] a. *They are entertaining.* b. *The clock was broken.*

- For [a], the verb interpretation is "They currently have guests", while the adjective interpretation is that they are a source of fun or enjoyment. The verb interpretation disappears if we add *very* (*They are very entertaining* can

only mean “They provide a lot of enjoyment”) or replace *be* by *seem* or *become* (*They became entertaining* can only mean “They started to provide enjoyment”). By contrast, the adjectival interpretation is excluded if we add an object for the verb (*They are entertaining some colleagues* can only mean they have guests who are colleagues), since virtually no adjectives license objects.

- For [b], the verb interpretation describes an event: “Someone or something broke the clock”. The adjectival interpretation, by contrast, describes a state: “The clock was inoperative”. Brokenness tends to be thought of as a yes-or-no property rather than a scalar one, so in general the adjective *broken* doesn’t take *very* as modifier, but it certainly can (in fact *very broken* is a common phrase among computer programmers). And the *seem* test is also relevant: *It seemed broken* can only be adjectival.

6.1.4 Adjectives versus Determinatives

The distinction between adjectives and **determinatives** is not as sharply drawn as those between adjectives and nouns or adjectives and verbs. Indeed, traditional grammars generally lump all determinatives in with the adjectives or pick them out as a class of ‘limiting adjectives’. Nevertheless, the definite article *the* and the indefinite article *a* differ strikingly from prototypical adjectives with respect to both syntax and meaning:

- Under certain circumstances the articles are not omissible. NPs with a count singular noun as head must in most cases have some kind of determiner – either a genitive NP, as in *The neighbour’s dog was barking*, or a DP, as in *A dog was barking* or *Almost every dog was barking*. In these last two examples, the DP can’t be omitted: **Dog was barking* is ungrammatical.
- The articles are non-gradable.
- The articles cannot be used predicatively (**It seemed the*).
- The articles serve to mark the NP as definite or indefinite rather than denoting some property of the referent.

Other items can then be assigned to the determinative category by virtue of having one or more of the following properties:

- [15] i They don’t occur after one or other of the articles.
 ii They can occur as the only **pre-head dependent** of a count singular noun.
 iii They can occur as **fused head** in a partitive construction. (Many adjectives can too, but only when they are preceded by a determiner; see [9ii] above.)

The examples in [16] show how these properties distinguish the determinative *some* from the adjective *good*:

- [16]
- | | DETERMINATIVE | ADJECTIVE |
|-----|---|--|
| i | a. * <i>She gave me the <u>some</u> apples.</i> | b. <i>He gave me the <u>good</u> apples.</i> |
| ii | a. <i><u>Some</u> guy called to see you.</i> | b. * <i><u>Good</u> guy called to see you.</i> |
| iii | a. <i>I took <u>some</u> of your books.</i> | b. * <i>I took <u>good</u> of your books.</i> |

- In [i], [a] is inadmissible because *some* cannot follow the article *the*.
- In [ii], *guy* is a count singular noun and requires a determiner, such as *a* or *the* – or *some*.
- In [iii], *some* is functioning as fused head with a partitive complement, a construction which does not admit adjectives except for comparative and superlatives (*the younger of the two, the best of the lot*).

6.1.5 Gradable and Non-Gradable Adjectives

We have said that prototypical adjectives have comparative and superlative forms and take degree modifiers such as *very*, *pretty*, and *too* (“excessively”). Adjectives of this kind are said to be **gradable**. They denote scalar properties that can apply in varying degrees. *Good*, *old*, *big*, *loud*, *heavy*, and thousands of others denote properties of this kind – and one can ask about the degree to which the property applies with a *how* question: *How big is it?*, etc.

But not all adjectives are of this kind. There are also **non-gradable** adjectives, as in *an alphabetical list*. It makes no sense to ask how alphabetical a list is or to say that one list is more alphabetical than another. *Alphabetical* denotes a property that is not scalar: you either have it or you don’t. Some other examples of non-gradable adjectives denoting non-scalar properties are given in [17]:

- [17]
- | | | | |
|------------------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| <i>the <u>chief</u> difficulty</i> | <i><u>federal</u> taxes</i> | <i><u>glandular</u> fever</i> | <i>my <u>left</u> arm</i> |
| <i>a <u>medical</u> problem</i> | <i><u>phonetic</u> symbols</i> | <i><u>pubic</u> hair</i> | <i>their <u>tenth</u> attempt</i> |

Some adjectives can be used in either way: like the distinction between count and non-count in nouns, the gradable vs non-gradable distinction applies to uses rather than lexemes as such:

- [18]
- | | NON-GRADABLE USE | GRADABLE USE |
|-----|--|--|
| i | a. <i>in the <u>public</u> interest</i> | b. <i>a very <u>public</u> quarrel</i> |
| ii | a. <i>the <u>British</u> government</i> | b. <i>a very <u>British</u> style of humour</i> |
| iii | a. <i>The motorway is now <u>open</u>.</i> | b. <i>He was more <u>open</u> with us than the boss.</i> |

Typically, as in these examples, the non-gradable sense is the basic one, with the gradable sense representing an extended use.

6.1.6 The Structure of Adjective Phrases

An AdjP consists of an adjective as **head**, alone or accompanied by one or more **dependents**. The dependents may be **complements**, licensed by the head, or **modifiers**, less restricted in their occurrence.

Complements

The complements are almost always PPs, as in [19], or subordinate clauses, as in [20]:

- [19] *afraid of the dark* *bent on revenge* *conversant with it* *good at chess*
 kind to children *remote from reality* *unaltered by heat* *unfit for use*
- [20] *glad it was over* *uncertain what to do* *eager to win* *hard to grasp*
 busy making lunch *difficult for us to see* *thankful that he left* *glad it was over*

- The choice of preposition in [19] depends on the head adjective: we couldn't have, for example, **afraid on the dark* or **bent of revenge*. With certain adjectives (in particular senses) the PP is obligatory: the sense of *bent* shown here, for example, requires a PP complement with *on* (or *upon*); and *conversant* cannot occur at all without a complement.
- The kind of subordinate clause likewise depends on the adjective: *glad it was over* is grammatical but **glad what to do about it* isn't; *busy making lunch* is grammatical but **busy to make lunch* isn't; and so on.

Modifiers

The most common type of modifier is an AdvP, most commonly consisting of just an adverb, as underlined in [21i], but other categories are also found: DPs (underlined in [21ii]), PPs in a few cases (as in [21iii]), and in a very limited range of cases, NPs (as in [21iv]):

- [21] i *extremely hot; morally wrong; very useful; almost completely watertight*
 ii *this young; that old; no different; very much better; any taller*
 iii *cautious to excess; dangerous in the extreme; preferable on the whole*
 iv *five years old; two hours long; a great deal smaller; a bit overpowering*

6.1.7 Predicative Complements and Predicative Adjuncts

AdjPs headed by predicative adjectives usually function as predicative complements. As we saw in §4.5, predicative complements occur with both **intransitive** and **transitive** verbs:

- [22]
- | | | | | | | | | |
|----|----------|--------------|-------------|----|------------|----------|----------|-------------|
| | | INTRANSITIVE | | | TRANSITIVE | | | |
| a. | The idea | seems | ridiculous. | b. | I | consider | the idea | ridiculous. |
| | S | V | PredComp | | S | V | Obj | PredComp |

The adjective here is related to a **predicand** in each case: the predicative complement *ridiculous* is understood as applying to the idea. The predicand is subject in the intransitive construction and object in the transitive construction.

But in addition to being complements licensed by the head verb, predicative AdjPs can be adjuncts. Compare, for example:

- [23] i PREDICATIVE COMPLEMENT *Max was unwilling to accept these terms.*
 ii PREDICATIVE ADJUNCT *Unwilling to accept these terms, Max resigned.*

In [i] the AdjP is a complement licensed by the verb (*be*), but in [ii] it is an adjunct, with no such licensing (the verb *resign* doesn't license adjective phrase complements). It is nevertheless still predicative, in that it is related to a predicand. That is, we understand in [ii], just as in [i], that the unwillingness to accept the terms applies to Max.

The clearest cases of predicative adjuncts are **supplements**, which are detached by intonation or punctuation from the rest of the clause: see §8.11.

6.1.8 Adjectives Limited to Modifier or Complement Function

Although most adjectives can be used both as attributive modifiers or predicatively as complements or adjuncts, some are restricted to one or other of these two uses:

- [24]
- | | ATTRIBUTIVE USE | PREDICATIVE USE |
|-----|---------------------------------------|--|
| i | a. <i>a <u>huge</u> hole</i> | b. <i>The hole was <u>huge</u>.</i> |
| ii | a. <i><u>utter</u> nonsense</i> | b. <i>*That nonsense was <u>utter</u>.</i> |
| iii | a. <i>*the <u>asleep</u> children</i> | b. <i>The children were <u>asleep</u>.</i> |

- *Huge* illustrates the default case, where the adjective appears both attributively and predicatively.
- *Utter* is an exceptional case: an **attributive-only** adjective, one that can be used attributively, as in [iia], but not predicatively, as seen in [iib].
- *Asleep* is the opposite kind of exceptional case: a **never-attributive** adjective; it can occur predicatively, as in [iiib], but not attributively, as seen in [iiia].

Attributive-Only Adjectives

NPs containing a sample of other adjectives that are **attributive-only** are given in [25]:

- [25]
- | | | |
|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| <i>these <u>damn</u> budget cuts</i> | <i>the <u>eventual</u> winner</i> | <i>her <u>former</u> husband</i> |
| <i>our <u>future</u> prospects</i> | <i>the <u>main</u> problem</i> | <i>a <u>mere</u> child</i> |
| <i>the <u>only</u> drawback</i> | <i>their <u>own</u> fault</i> | <i>the <u>principal</u> advantage</i> |
| <i>the <u>putative</u> father</i> | <i>the <u>sole</u> survivor</i> | <i>a <u>veritable</u> jungle</i> |

Never-Attributive Adjectives

Here are some further examples of predicative uses of **never-attributive** adjectives:

- [26] *The house was ablaze.* *The boy seemed afraid.* *The child was alone.*
 Something was amiss. *It was devoid of interest.* *Corruption was rife.*
 It is liable to flood. *The baby looked content.* *I was utterly bereft.*

Restrictions May Apply to Senses rather than Lexemes

As with the gradable vs non-gradable distinction, the restrictions often apply just to certain senses of a lexeme. In [27], for example, it is ONLY IN THE SENSES ILLUSTRATED that the underlined adjectives in [i] are attributive-only, and those in [ii] never-attributive:

- [27] i *a certain country* *the late queen* *the lawful heir*
 ii *I feel faint* *He was glad to see her.* *I'm sorry you missed it.*

In the [i] examples, *certain* means “specific”, *late* means “now dead”, and *lawful* means “as defined by law”. But in *certain failure* and *Failure was certain* we understand *certain* as “inevitable”; in *her late arrival* and *She was late*, we understand *late* as “unpunctual”; and in *a lawful action* and *It was perfectly lawful* we understand *lawful* as “not forbidden by law”. *Glad* and *sorry* also have attributive-only senses, illustrated in *glad tidings* and *a sorry state of affairs*.

Structural Restrictions on Attributive Adjectives

Attributive AdjPs mostly cannot contain dependents that follow the head. The typical case is as in [28], where the underlined adjective licenses a post-head dependent (double-underlined), and the AdjP is allowed only predicatively as in the [a] cases, not attributively as in the [b] cases.

- [28] PREDICATIVE ATTRIBUTIVE
 i a. *He was devoted to his kids.* b. **He was a devoted to his kids dad.*
 ii a. *She is cautious to excess.* b. **She's a cautious to excess manager.*

There are just a few post-head dependents that can occur with attributive adjectives, though, as seen in [29].

- [29] i a. *The house was big enough.* b. *a big enough house*
 ii a. *The result was better than expected.* b. *a better than expected result*
 iii a. *It was better than we expected.* b. *a better result than we expected*

- *Enough* is allowed quite generally after gradable adjectives, as in [i].
- *Than expected* in [iib] is a short comparative complement (see Chapter 13) that is permitted within an attributive AdjP.
- A longer phrase would have to be located after the head noun, as in [iiib], where it functions as **indirect complement** (see §5.4).

6.1.9 Other Functions of AdjPs

Besides the two major functions discussed above, which account for most instances of adjectives, there are two functions in which AdjPs are found.

Postpositives

Postpositive adjectives function in NP structure as POST-HEAD INTERNAL MODIFIER. There are three cases to consider:

- [30] i *everything useful somebody rich somewhere safe those responsible*
 ii *children keen on sport a report full of errors a suggestion likely to offend*
 iii *the only modification possible any students asleep the president elect*

- The examples in [i] have fused determiner-heads, making it impossible for the AdjPs to occur in the usual pre-head position – compare *everything useful* with *every useful thing* (see §5.7.4).
- The modifiers in [ii] can't be placed in pre-head position because the adjectives have their own post-head dependents (cf. [28] above); the postpositive construction provides a way of getting around the fact that hardly any such AdjPs can occur as attributive modifiers.
- A limited number of adjectives can occur postpositively without their own dependents and with a non-fused head noun, as in [iii]: *possible* can also be attributive, whereas *asleep* (as we have seen) cannot. *Elect* (meaning “recently elected but not in office yet”) is one of a very small number of exceptional adjectives that occur only postpositively.

External Modifiers

Certain forms of AdjP occur right at the beginning of the NP, before the indefinite article *a*:

- [31] i a. [How long a delay] *will there be?* b. *He'd chosen [too dark a colour].*
 ii a. *It seemed [such a bargain].* b. [What a fool] *I was to sell them.*

- One type are AdjPs containing *how*, *as*, *so*, *too*, *this* or *that* as modifier, as in [i]. (Some speakers insert an *of* after the adjective: *how long of a delay*, etc.)
- Two special adjectives shown in [ii] can appear by themselves in this position: *such* is one, and the use of *what* in the exclamative sense of [iib] is the other. The *what* of [iib] can't be the determinative *what*, because that can't precede the indefinite article (we get *What topping do you want?*, not **What a topping do you want?*).

Incidentally, if you have followed the claims we've made in this book so far, you'll have noticed that the extremely frequent written form *what* belongs grammatically to three different lexemes: it's a pronoun *what_N* in *You did what?*; a determinative *what_D* in *What sauce do you want?*; and an external modifier adjective *what_{ADJ}* in

exclamative clauses like *What a fool I've been*. Homophony of this sort – distinct words that sound exactly the same – is often encountered in English grammar, especially among frequent words. Another form that turns out to belong to three lexemes is *one*, which can be a common noun, a pronoun, or a determinative.

6.2 Adverbs

The **adverb** is the fourth and last of the categories of lexemes that have an indefinitely large and readily expandable membership. What makes adverbs so numerous is that the vast majority of adjectives have a related adverb formed by adding the suffix *-ly*. It is in these related adjective–adverb pairs that we can see most clearly the contrast between AdjPs as modifiers of nominals and adverb phrases as modifiers of VPs:

- | | MODIFICATION OF NOMINAL | MODIFICATION OF VP |
|-----|--|---|
| i | a. <i>a <u>really</u> <u>happy</u> <u>family</u></i> | b. <i>They <u>all</u> <u>lived</u> <u>really</u> <u>happily</u> together.</i> |
| ii | a. <i>a <u>very</u> <u>greedy</u> <u>child</u></i> | b. <i>The child <u>devoured</u> it <u>very</u> <u>greedily</u>.</i> |
| iii | a. <i>a <u>passionate</u> <u>lover</u></i> | b. <i>They <u>loved</u> each other <u>passionately</u>.</i> |

Here double underlining marks the head word, and single underlining marks the modifier – an AdjP in [a], an AdvP in [b]. The AdvPs in the [b] examples and similar examples below function as adjuncts in clause structure.

6.2.1 Adverb Phrases as Modifiers of Phrases other than Nominals

The term ‘adverb’ is based on the idea that these words are used for modifying verbs. What that misses is that AdvPs are used not just for modifying VPs but also other categories:

- | | | | | | | |
|------|-----|----|---|----|--|-------|
| [32] | i | a. | <i>a <u>virtual</u> <u>world</u></i> | b. | <i>*his <u>almost</u> <u>death</u></i> | [N] |
| | ii | a. | <i>It <u>virtually</u> <u>evaporated</u>.</i> | b. | <i>He <u>almost</u> <u>died</u>.</i> | [V] |
| | iii | a. | <i>It was <u>virtually</u> <u>impossible</u>.</i> | b. | <i>He was <u>almost</u> <u>dead</u>.</i> | [Adj] |
| | iv | a. | <i>He spoke <u>virtually</u> <u>inaudibly</u>.</i> | b. | <i>It fell <u>almost</u> <u>immediately</u>.</i> | [Adv] |
| | v | a. | <i>They broke <u>virtually</u> <u>every</u> rule.</i> | b. | <i>I have [<u>almost</u> <u>no</u>] cash.</i> | [D] |

The annotations on the right give the category of the (double-underlined) lexical head.

- In the [a] set, we have a phrase headed by the adjective *virtual* as modifier in the nominal, with a phrase headed by the adverb *virtually* as modifier in the other four phrases.
- In the [b] set, the adverb *almost* heads phrases functioning as modifier in a VP, and AdjP, and an AdvP, but since it isn't derived from any adjective, there is no matching nominal modifier to complete [ib].

Not only do AdvPs modify VPs, AdjPs, AdvPs, and DPs, they also modify clauses, PPs, and occasionally NPs. Again, we double-underline the head that is modified in [34].

- [34] i a. Virtually all copies are torn. b. I have literally hardly any cash. [DP]
 ii a. I did it virtually by myself. b. It lasted literally until midnight. [PP]
 iii a. I'm virtually his only friend. b. I bought literally the last copy. [NP]

Note that in [iii] the AdvP functions as external modifier, not internal modifier like *virtual* in [33ia] (see §5.6).

The basic division, then, is very roughly between phrases that function as modifiers of NPs and phrases that modify other categories. The nominal modifiers are almost entirely adjectives, and the others are almost entirely adverbs. But we have to say ‘almost entirely’ here because there are some minor exceptions.

First, some adverbs can head phrases modifying nominals, mainly in written English: we find examples like *the withdrawal indefinitely of the vehicular ferry service*, where *indefinitely* modifies the nominal headed by *withdrawal*, and *a shortage of timber internationally*, where *internationally* modifies the nominal headed by *shortage*. Not all adverbs can do this (manner adverbs never can), and they can never precede the noun.

Second, adverbs can sometimes be external modifiers of NPs, as in *He did it for exactly the wrong reasons*.

Third, there are a few cases where AdjPs appear to modify other AdjPs: *blind drunk*, *cold sober*, *squeaky clean*.

So once again those who would like to think of English as a tidy and logical language must face disappointment: the generalization that AdjPs modify nominals and AdvPs modify everything else is nearly true, but not quite.

6.2.2 Adverbs versus Adjectives

In §6.1.1 we listed three major properties of adjectives, having to do with **function**, **grade**, and **modification**. The last two apply to adverbs as well as adjectives.

Adverbs can generally appear in comparative and superlative constructions, though this fact is obscured by a morphological quirk: the *-er* and *-est* suffixes are incompatible with the *-ly* suffix: notice that both **quicklier* and **quickerly* are (mysteriously) impossible words. That means for the most part you have to use *more* and *most*, rather than inflection, to make adverbs comparative or superlative: *quickly*, *more quickly*, *most quickly*.

And adverbs occur with the same modifiers as adjectives, as we saw in [33]. The real difference between phrases headed by adjectives and phrases headed by adverbs lies in their functions.

We’ve already seen that it’s very common to find AdjPs with nominals and AdvPs with other phrases:

- [35] i *her most impressive performance* [AdjP modifying nominal]
 ii *She performed most impressively.* [AdvP modifying VP]

But there's another functional difference that is no less important. Most AdjPs can function as predicative complements in VPs, but AdvPs do not normally occur in this function:

- [36] i *Her performance was most impressive.* [adjective]
 ii **Her performance was most impressively.* [adverb]

The adverbs that aren't derived from adjectives are the same in this respect – they can't head predicative complements either:

- [37] i *She almost succeeded. *Her success was almost.*
 ii *I rather enjoyed it. *My enjoyment was rather.*

In clause structure, AdjPs typically occur as complements, more specifically predicative complement, while AdvPs generally function as adjuncts. We have to say 'generally' because there are one or two verbs that do seem to license an AdvP as an obligatory complement: the AdvP in clauses like *They treated her abominably* cannot be omitted without changing the meaning of the verb *treat*, and the AdvP in *We had to word the letter very carefully* can't really be omitted at all (**We had to word the letter*).

We saw in §6.1.7 that AdjPs can also occur as adjuncts; the difference between such AdjPs and AdvPs is that the AdjPs are interpreted predicatively, i.e., as associated with a predicator, whereas this is not the case with AdvPs. Compare these examples:

- [38] i *Angry at what she'd said, Max refused to see her.* [AdjP]
 ii *Max angrily refused to see her.* [AdvP]

In [i] the property of being angry at what she'd said is attributed to Max: the AdjP relates to the predicator *Max* just as it does in the predicative complement construction *Max was angry at what she'd said*. In [ii], by contrast, the AdvP simply describes the manner of the refusal. The clearest cases of AdjPs in predicative adjunct function are set apart intonationally as supplements (that's what the comma in [i] signals), whereas AdvPs in adjunct function are usually integrated phonologically into the structure of the clause.

Overlap between the Categories

We do find some overlap between the adjective and adverb categories – or rather, cases where an adjective and adverb share the same shape:

- [39] i *ADJ their early departure a hard worker I don't feel well.*
 ii *ADV They departed early. He worked hard. I didn't play well.*

With some items the meaning is the same, while in others it is different:

- *Early* has the same meaning in the two leftmost examples above.
- *Hard* has the same meaning in our second pair, but the adverb has a much more restricted meaning than the adjective – there is, for example, no adverbial use corresponding to the adjective in *This problem is quite hard* or *The ground is too hard*.
- The adjective *well* means “good” in the sense of “in good health”, while the adverb means “in a good manner”, in other words, competently or effectively.

The overlap is greater in AmE than BrE, and greater still in some non-standard dialects, which allow sentences like *‘Drive careful now*, and *‘He treats her real nice*. These are not signs of error or laziness. They’re just indications of a somewhat broader adjective-adverb overlap than the one we find in Standard English.

Adjectives as well as Adverbs Can Be Formed with *·ly*

Although the addition of the *·ly* suffix usually forms an adverb from an adjective, it doesn’t invariably do so. In particular, there are some adjectives that are formed from nouns in this way; examples are given in [40]:

- [40] i N *beast coward death father friend prince woman*
 ii ADJ *beastly cowardly deathly fatherly friendly princely womanly*

Despite the *·ly* ending, the words in [ii] are adjectives, not adverbs. They can head phrases that modify nominals and function as predicative complements, and they don’t modify VPs, as illustrated for *friendly* in [41]:

- [41] ATTRIBUTIVE USE PREDICATIVE USE MODIFYING VP
 a friendly old man *He seems quite friendly.* **He behaved friendly.*

A small number of adjectives ending in *·ly* are formed from other adjectives, like *deadly* (from *dead*) and *lively* (from *live*). *Kindly* is sometimes adjective (as in *He was a kindly old gentleman*) but more often an adverb (as in *She treated them very kindly*).

6.2.3 The Structure of AdvPs

The structure of AdvPs is similar to that of AdjPs, but somewhat simpler. Dependents can again be divided into complements and modifiers.

Complements

A few adverbs formed with the *·ly* suffix license complements:

- [42] i *The lower portion can move independently of the upper part.*
 ii *Fortunately for the students, the class was cancelled.*

An adverb almost always licenses the same kind of complement as the adjective from which it is formed: *independent of the upper part* and *fortunate for the students* are grammatical AdjPs. Other adverbs taking complements include *separately* (which licenses *from* PPs), *similarly* (which occurs with *to* PPs), and *equally* (which takes *with* PPs).

Modifiers

Modifiers are mostly AdvPs (as in [43i], where the adverb heads are double-underlined and the modifier is single-underlined), but DPs ([ii]), PPs ([iii]), and certain NPs ([iv]) are also found:

- [43] i *She sang very well. I did it rather hurriedly. He spoke remarkably clearly.*
 ii *I didn't do it that well. They arrived much sooner than we had expected.*
 iii *They behaved badly in the extreme. He didn't answer at all convincingly.*
 iv *We arrived three hours late. It had all happened a bit suddenly.*

Exercises on Chapter 6

1. For each of the following adjectives, decide whether it can be used in **attributive** function, whether it can be used in **predicative** function, and whether it can be used in **postpositive** function. Give your evidence in detail.

- i *alone*
- ii *available*
- iii *ersatz*
- iv *galore*
- v *immune*
- vi *latter*
- vii *marine*
- viii *previous*
- ix *prime*
- x *sleepy*

2. Classify the underlined words below as adjectives or nouns, justifying your answer by reference to the criteria given in [Chapters 5 and 6](#).

- i *She is secretary of the Film Society.*
- ii *I've always admired the Irish.*
- iii *That's not a government responsibility.*
- iv *I want the original, not a copy.*
- v *What they say is nonsense.*
- vi *That sounds great.*
- vii *It verges on the obscene.*

- viii *She's quite a comic.*
 ix *Do it the French way.*
 x *He's learning French.*
3. Which of the underlined words below are adjectives, which are verbs, and which are **ambiguous** between the two categories in the examples given? Give evidence for your answers.
- i *The trains aren't running today.*
 ii *What we said was simply ignored.*
 iii *She sounded quite impressed.*
 iv *It was a rewarding experience.*
 v *His act is not very amusing.*
 vi *His act is not amusing the crowd.*
 vii *We were surrounded.*
 viii *The bill was paid.*
 ix *He was shot in the leg.*
 x *Let sleeping dogs lie.*
4. Classify each of the following adjectives as (a) **gradable**; (b) **non-gradable**; or (c) **ambiguous** (usable in two senses of which one is gradable and the other is not). In case (c), give examples of the two uses, commenting on the difference in meaning.
- i *certain*
 ii *Christian*
 iii *feminine*
 iv *latter*
 v *main*
 vi *philosophical*
 vii *true*
 viii *worthy*
 ix *primary*
 x *childlike*
5. For each of these examples, identify the **predicand** of the underlined predicative AdjP.
- i *We found your suggestion very helpful.*
 ii *The problem was thought insoluble by many.*
 iii *Unable to contain his anger, Max stormed out of the room.*
 iv *We find the accused guilty, your honour.*
 v *Eventually, too tired to cry, the two children fell asleep.*
 vi *Full of determination, I went to the Civil Palace to see La Señora Luminosa.*

6. Which of the following adjectives license PP complements with a particular preposition as head? Give examples for those that do. If you cannot find any examples in which the adjective has a PP complement, just write 'none'.

- i *able*
- ii *capable*
- iii *careful*
- iv *clever*
- v *concise*
- vi *easy*
- vii *free*
- viii *intent*
- ix *long*
- x *responsible*

7. Classify the underlined words below as adjectives or adverbs, giving your reasons in each case.

- i Fortunately, he had plenty of time.
- ii He was going far too fast.
- iii She seemed a very kindly old soul.
- iv We were annoyed at their late arrival.
- v They're becoming increasingly unruly.
- vi I was feeling quite poorly.
- vii She works extremely hard.
- viii We made too many concessions.
- ix Kindly refrain from smoking.
- x That was very ungentlemanly.

8. Which of the following adjectives has no corresponding adverb?

- i *available*
- ii *big*
- iii *Canadian*
- iv *great*
- v *hot*
- vi *likely*
- vii *long*
- viii *only*
- ix *red*
- x *simple*

9. Construct convincing examples in which an AdvP headed by *quite* functions as a modifier in: [i] a VP; [ii] an AdjP; [iii] an AdvP; [iv] a PP with a head PP; and [v] an NP with a head NP.

10. Classify the underlined modifiers below as AdjPs, AdvPs, or DPs, giving your reasons in each case.
- i She's among the many talented innovators at UVa.
 - ii They no longer defend even the most basic rights of the working class.
 - iii They no longer defend even the most basic rights of the working class.
 - iv This is one of the few places in the city where feral appliances can run loose.
 - v It's really not that bad.
 - vi The faster you go, the less fuel efficient your engine is.
 - vii It can be traced back to the very beginning of time.
 - viii From the little I know, I can see that she was a great leader.
 - ix You have to take some joy from the little things
 - x Why are all children's novels about orphans and only children?
11. Use the licensing criterion to determine whether the ten underlined expressions in the examples below are complements or adjuncts. In the case of complements, cite three adjectives that license such a complement and three that do not.
- i Bourdieu got very interested in the idea of "cultural capital".
 - ii It is a tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury.
 - iii I'm unsure whether she thinks so or not.
 - iv It's unconstitutional, whether you think so or not.
 - v What's wrong with this picture?
 - vi I am aware that this thread is old.
 - vii I'm sorry I'm late.
 - viii It is clear that there is a sufficiently small positive real number.
 - ix She was surprised when she heard Xi's address.
 - x This finding is similar to that of the previous study.
12. Identify the function of each underlined phrase.
- i The gas tank was on the other side of the vehicle.
 - ii Our customers are very good at expressing their surface-level desires.
 - iii Other cast members relatively new to the industry include Barbie Ferreira.
 - iv It's not that big a deal.
 - v This was no different than any other climb.
 - vi Are you sure you don't want me to portal you guys out?
 - vii I met the foreign minister of the Kingdom of the Hawaiian Islands.
 - viii Students should engage in sustained moderate to vigorous physical activity.
 - ix I'd find a farrier, a couple of weavers, and most important of all, a tavern.
13. [Supplementary exercise] Books on how to write by authors like E. B. White and William Zinsser insist that you should try to get rid of adjectives and adverbs.

As an exercise in seeing what implausible advice this is, attempt to rewrite the following paragraph from Sarah Zhang's 2016 *Wired* article 'How to fit the world's biggest indoor waterfall in an airport' without using any adjectives or adverbs.

So if you're Changi Airport and you want to top yourself, you have to go big. Bold. Ostentatious. You bring in WET, the water design firm that designs fountains for famously over-the-top places like the Bellagio, Burj Khalifa, and the Sochi Olympics. When the airport's newest structure designed by architect Moshe Safdie opens in 2018, it will boast the Rain Vortex, the world's tallest indoor waterfall.

14. [Supplementary exercise] Consider the word *certain* meaning "particular" (*It works in certain conditions*). Is it more like a determinative or more like an adjective? Provide your evidence.
15. [Supplementary exercise] Using your imagination to fill in extra detail where necessary (since in some cases, you may need to change or add things), rewrite each sentence so that the AdjP has a meaningful predicand (i.e., so that it doesn't fall within the definition of the 'dangling modifier' phenomenon).

Example: [?]*Eager to get in from the storm, a warm house awaited.* →

Eager to get in from the storm, he thought of the warm house that awaited.

- i [?]*The road rolled by, happy with life.*
- ii [?]*Complete with a kosher menu, we organize a tour of India's Jewish communities.*
- iii [?]*She ran her tongue, free of braces at last, over her newly straightened teeth.*
- iv [?]*There were those wry comments, aware that he'll soon be an old fart himself.*
- v [?]*Convinced that a great fraud had taken place, a riot broke out.*
- vi [?]*There were wild looks, unsure what to do.*

16. Some adjectives and adverbs are interpreted deictically, just as some pronouns are. Decide which of the underlined words has a deictic interpretation.
 - i She said, "I'm not used to speaking to foreign people," and I refrained from pointing out who was the foreigner.
 - ii Many students may use dialects not local to their place of residence.
 - iii We cruised Pacific Avenue, known locally as 'the track'.
 - iv "I don't think it's grass tetany, though," the old man said.
 - v What were you learning at your old school?
 - vi Master Endo said the clan would rehire me at my former salary.
 - vii She went to the movies once or twice a month, always with a different girl.

- viii Britain's war experience was very different from America's.
- ix Apparently an earlier version of the page had even more inaccuracies.
- x Low oxygen levels appeared much earlier than they had in the 1800s.

17. Bracket the constituent that the underlined adjective is modifying. If it is ambiguous, use multiple sets of brackets.

Example: You've been selling illegal [Canadian maple syrup].

- i Add a pinch of kosher salt and two tablespoons of extra virgin olive oil.
- ii Beta carotene can be found in dark green leafy vegetables.
- iii Faye, wearing a pink polka dot outfit like her daughter's, greets everyone.
- iv Globally, more than 200 million people suffer from chronic obstructive pulmonary disease.
- v He had slightly ruffled light brown hair.
- vi He was editor and publisher of the Far Eastern Economic Review.
- vii It was expelled from the International Amateur Athletic Federation in 1976.
- viii The style developed in Argentina and other Latin American countries.
- ix The three remaining adult plants grow in the National Tropical Botanical Garden.
- x They could have been good old-fashioned pagans.

7

Prepositions and Particles

This chapter deals with the category traditionally known by the name **preposition**, but departs radically, in important ways, from the traditional definition of its membership: the list of members is considerably enlarged. It also deals, in §7.7.3, with PP complements of a type of known as **particles**.

7.1 The Traditional Category of Prepositions

Prepositions make up a much smaller class of lexemes than the inventories of verbs, nouns, adjectives, and adverbs, but it's larger than most people suspect: there are between 200 and 300 prepositions in English, and nearly every speaker knows more than a hundred. Traditional grammars list far fewer than that, but they are following a tradition that we reject. All the words traditionally classified as prepositions are classified as prepositions in our treatment too, but we'll argue that there are a significant number of other prepositions – chiefly words that formerly were misclassified as adverbs or as 'subordinating conjunctions'. We begin with an account of the category of prepositions as traditionally understood, and then gradually expand it.

Here's a sampling of the words that – in at least some of their uses – belong uncontroversially to the category of prepositions:

- [1] *above* *across* *after* *against* *at* *before* *behind*
 below *between* *beyond* *by* *down* *for* *from*
 in *into* *of* *off* *on* *over* *round*
 since *through* *to* *under* *up* *with* *without*

These words share the following properties.

7.1.1 They License Objects

Prepositions are traditionally analysed – indeed, defined – as always occurring before nouns. To put it in more modern terms, the claim is that they always take NP complements; we shall call non-predicative NP complements in PPs 'objects', just as we do in the case of VPs. In the following pairs, for example, traditional

grammar accepts the underlined words in [a] as prepositions, because they have objects, but (wrongly in our view) not those in [b]:

[2]	TRADITIONALLY A PREPOSITION	TRADITIONALLY NOT A PREPOSITION
i	a. <i>The sun sank <u>below</u> the horizon</i> .	b. <i>The sailors all went <u>below</u></i> .
ii	a. <i>I haven't seen her <u>since</u> Easter</i> .	b. <i>I haven't seen her <u>since</u> she left town</i> .
iii	a. <i>They set off <u>despite</u> the rain</i> .	b. <i>We stayed indoors <u>because</u> of the rain</i> .
iv	a. <i>⁰He jumped <u>out</u> the window</i> .	b. <i>He jumped <u>out</u> of the window</i> .

- *Below* traditionally fails to qualify in [ib], since it has no object.
- The other items in [b] fail to qualify because they have complements that are not NPs: a clause in [iib] and a PP headed by *of* in [iiib/ivb].
- With *out*, usage is split between dialects: in AmE, it can license an object, as in [iva], but in BrE it requires *of*; so on the traditional analysis it is a preposition in AmE but not in BrE!

7.1.2 No Inflection

The prepositions of traditional grammar do not inflect at all. *Through* does not have inflected forms **througther* or **throughest*, even though it is possible to go through a tunnel to a greater or lesser extent, or maximally far.

7.1.3 Meaning: Relations in Space or Time

Most traditional prepositions have meanings to do with relations in space or time: *at the post office* identifies a spatial location, *into the garden* fixes a direction of travel, *after lunch* locates a time period as following lunchtime, etc. Not all prepositions have this kind of meaning (for example, *despite* in [2iiia] doesn't), so this can't be used as a condition for belonging to the category of prepositions; but it is relevant to a general definition of prepositions, and we will take it up again in §7.4.

7.1.4 Function: Head of a Wide Range of Dependents

Pps are headed by prepositions, and they characteristically occur in a range of functions, notably dependents of either nouns or verbs, including as a special case the complement in a VP headed by *be*. In the following examples, single underlining marks the PP, double underlining the head on which it is dependent:

[3]	DEPENDENT IN NOMINAL	DEPENDENT IN VP	COMPLEMENT IN <i>be</i> VP
i	<i>a <u>house</u> <u>at the beach</u></i>	<i>He <u>saw</u> her <u>at school</u></i> .	<i>He <u>is</u> <u>at lunch</u></i> .
ii	<i>the <u>chair</u> <u>in the corner</u></i>	<i>She <u>fell</u> <u>in the pool</u></i> .	<i>We <u>were</u> <u>in the pool</u></i> .
iii	<i>the <u>woman</u> <u>from Paris</u></i>	<i>She <u>comes</u> <u>from Paris</u></i> .	<i>She <u>is</u> <u>from Paris</u></i> .
iv	<i>a <u>bottle</u> <u>of milk</u></i>	<i>I don't <u>approve</u> <u>of it</u></i> .	<i>That <u>is</u> <u>of interest</u></i> .

7.1.5 PPs Selected by Certain Verbs

There are verbs of motion like *head* and *dart* that obligatorily license direction-denoting PP complements: *They were heading toward the river* and *Immediately, the mouse darted back into the hole* are grammatical but **They were heading* and **Immediately, the mouse darted* are not.

7.2 Extending the Preposition Category

The reason we extend the membership of the preposition category beyond the words that traditional grammar calls prepositions is that we see no justification for restricting it to words that have objects. That is, we think the condition discussed under §7.1.1, though frequently met, should not be regarded as essential.

Notice first the effect of the object requirement on how we have to classify the word *before* in the three constructions shown in [4], where we compare *before* with the verb *know*:

[4]	TYPE OF COMPLEMENT	<i>before</i> AS HEAD	<i>know</i> AS HEAD
i	OBJECT NP	<i>We left <u>before the last act.</u></i>	<i>We <u>know the last act.</u></i>
ii	CLAUSE	<i>That was <u>before he died.</u></i>	<i>I <u>know he died.</u></i>
iii	NO COMPLEMENT	<i>I had seen her once <u>before.</u></i>	<i>Yes, I <u>know.</u></i>

In [i] the complement of a phrase headed by *before* or *know* (marked by double underlining) is an object NP; in [ii] it is a subordinate clause; and in [iii] there is no complement. Everyone agrees that this difference in the complements has no bearing on the classification of *know*: it is a verb in all three examples – a verb that happens to license either an object NP or a clause as its internal complement, and where having a complement is optional.

Traditional grammars, and most published dictionaries, treat *before* in a completely different way. It is called a preposition in [i], a ‘subordinating conjunction’ in [ii], and an ‘adverb’ in [iii]. This triple categorization is unnecessary. It is much simpler to give *before* a uniform analysis, treating it as a preposition in all three cases, just as *know* is a verb in all three cases.

Notice in the first place that *before* has the same meaning in all of [i–iii]: it denotes a preceding time period – earlier than the time identified by either the complement or (if there isn’t one) the context. Secondly, the same modifiers are possible in all three constructions. We could, for example, insert such items as *long*, *right*, *shortly*, *an hour*, or *a short while* in front of *before* in all three examples in [4]. The difference between the three instances of *before* is purely a matter of what complement it has. Nowhere else in English grammar do you find a category distinction based purely on a difference in complement preferences.

Our expansion of the preposition category involves redrawing the boundary between prepositions and the items traditional grammars called ‘subordinating conjunctions’, and the boundary between prepositions and adverbs. We take up these two topics in turn.

7.2.1 Prepositions and Subordinators

The traditional category of ‘subordinating conjunctions’ is said to contain (among others) the words in [5]:

- [5] i *after* *before* *since* *till* *until*
 ii a. *although* *because* *if_c* *lest* *provided* *though* *unless*
 b. *if_i* *that* *whether*

We regard English as having two separate words spelled *if*. There is one that forms conditional adjuncts, as in *I’ll help you if I can*; we’ll call it *if_c* – ‘c’ for ‘conditional’. The other is an alternative to *whether* for introducing subordinate closed interrogative clauses as in *See if there are any vacancies*, which is an alternant of *See whether there are any vacancies*; we’ll call it *if_i* (‘i’ for ‘interrogative’).

The words in [5i] are traditionally treated as belonging to two categories: preposition and ‘subordinating conjunction’. Those in [ii] are not; they are placed just in the ‘subordinating conjunction’ category. The dual classification treatment of the words in [i] is a mistake in our view; they should be analysed simply as prepositions that license different kinds of complement. But when we look more carefully at the evidence we find there are good reasons for putting the words in [iia] into the preposition category as well as those in [i]. This leaves a very small **subordinator** category, with the words in [iib] as three of its members: *that*, *whether*, and *if_i*.

The major argument for drawing the boundary between prepositions and subordinators between [iia] and [iib] is that *that*, *whether*, and *if_i* are just meaningless **markers of subordination**, whereas the other words in [5] are fully meaningful words functioning as **heads** of the constituents they introduce. Consider the following examples:

- [6] i a. *I think [(that) she’s probably right].*
 b. *I don’t know [whether they’ve received our message yet].*
 ii a. *She stayed behind for a few minutes [after the others had left].*
 b. *They complained [because we didn’t finish the job this week].*

- In [i], the bracketed constituents are subordinate clauses, with *that* and *whether* simply marking the subordination: the main clause counterparts are *She is probably right* (declarative) and *Have they received our letter yet?* (interrogative). In this context the subordinator *that* is optional (as indicated by the parentheses): the clause functions as a complement of the *think* VP, and after a verb that licenses a clause complement it is optional to include a word marking that clause

as subordinate. *Whether* is not omissible, because it marks the clause not just as subordinate but also as interrogative: it is just with the default declarative type that the subordinator is often optional.

- *After* and *because* in [ii] by contrast are not grammatical markers of subordination. They have independent meaning, and it is by virtue of this meaning that we interpret the bracketed constituents as adjuncts of time and reason respectively. They are best analysed as heads – just as *after* is a head in the PP time adjunct *after the departure of the others*. This means they are not themselves contained in subordinate clauses: in [ii], the subordinate clauses are just *the others had left* and *we didn't finish the job this week*. These clauses function as complements within the PPs headed by *after* and *because*.

7.2.2 Prepositions versus Adverbs

Prepositions with Optional Objects

We begin the task of redrawing the boundaries between prepositions and adverbs by looking further at words like *before* in [4], which can occur either with an object or with no complement. Other words of this kind are listed in [7]:

- [7] *aboard* *above* *across* *after* *along* *behind* *below*
 beneath *beyond* *by* *down* *in* *off* *outside*
 over *past* *round* *since* *through* *under* *up*

As we have noted, these are traditionally analysed as prepositions when they have an object but as adverbs when they don't:

- [8] TRADITIONAL PREPOSITION TRADITIONAL ADVERB
- i a. *She went aboard the liner.* b. *She went aboard.*
- ii a. *He sat outside her bedroom.* b. *He sat outside.*

The traditional adverb category has often been referred to as a kind of classificatory wastebasket, a dumping ground for words that can't be placed in any of the other more clearly defined categories. This certainly seems to be what's going on in the present case. The traditional account can't allow *aboard* in [ib] or *outside* in [iib] as prepositions because prepositions are defined as requiring objects. They are obviously not nouns, verbs, adjectives, 'conjunctions', or interjections, so by elimination they have to be called adverbs.

But these words don't satisfy the definition that traditional grammar gives to the adverb category: 'An adverb is a word that modifies a verb, an adjective, or another adverb'. They typically occur, for example, in the three functions given in [3] for PPs:

- [9] DEPENDENT IN NOMINAL DEPENDENT IN *be* VP COMPLEMENT IN OTHER VP
- i *the conditions aboard* *She is still aboard.* *She went aboard.*
- ii *the temperature outside* *He is outside.* *He sat outside.*

A phrase like *the conditions aboard* is analogous to (and synonymous with) *the conditions aboard the vessel*. What's more, true adverbs can't occur where *aboard* does: compare *The conditions aboard were atrocious* with **The conditions illegally were atrocious*. Genuine AdvPs can be pre-head modifiers in VPs, but compare *We carefully questioned the crew* with the ungrammatical **We aboard questioned the crew*. *Aboard* doesn't show adverb behaviour.

The first two of the functions illustrated in [9] are characteristic of prepositions, but not of adverbs. We'll look at each in turn.

Dependents in Nominals

Adverbs do not normally occur as dependents in nominals: in related adjective-adverb pairs it is the adjective that appears in this function. No such restriction applies to prepositions. Compare:

- | | | |
|------|--|---|
| [10] | PP | AdvP |
| | i a. <i>She criticized them <u>with tact</u>.</i> | b. <i>She criticized them <u>very tactfully</u>.</i> |
| | ii a. <i>[A manager <u>with tact</u>] is needed.</i> | b. <i>*[A manager <u>very tactfully</u>] is needed.</i> |

- The underlined expressions in [i] modify the VP, and we see that both PP and AdvP are admissible.
- In [ii], however, they modify the nominal headed by *manager*, and here the PP is admissible, but the adverb is not; instead we need an adjective: *a tactful manager*.

Complement of a *Be* Verb Phrase

Adverbs are not normally licensed as complements by *be* in its ascriptive sense; instead we get adjectives, in their predicative use. As with (a) above, there is no comparable constraint applying to prepositions:

- | | | |
|------|--|--|
| [11] | PP AS COMPLEMENT OF <i>be</i> VP | AdvP AS COMPLEMENT OF <i>be</i> VP |
| | i a. <i>The key is <u>under the mat</u>.</i> | b. <i>*Lucy was <u>enthusiastically</u> today.</i> |
| | ii a. <i>The meeting is <u>on Tuesday</u>.</i> | b. <i>*Rain is <u>again</u>.</i> |

The [a] examples, with a PP functioning as the complement of a *be* VP, are impeccable, but the [b] ones, with an adverb in this function, are ungrammatical.

- Instead of [ib] we have *Lucy was enthusiastic today*, with the corresponding adjective.
- Since the adverb *again* has no adjective counterpart we cannot correct [iib] in the same way; for this particular example we could have *It is raining again*, with *again* now functioning as modifier in the VP headed by the verb *rain*.

So, given that *aboard* and *outside* readily function as modifiers in nominals and as complements of *be* VPs, their classification as adverbs is inconsistent with the traditional definition of that category. The best way to remove this inconsistency is to amend the definition of prepositions so that they are no longer required to have an object. *Aboard*, *outside*, and similar words will then always be prepositions, whether they have objects or not.

This revision gets rid of two complications simultaneously. It removes the need for a dual classification for these words, and it removes from the adverb category a number of words that differ radically in their syntactic properties from prototypical adverbs like *tactfully*, *enthusiastically*, *again*, etc., making the adverb category more coherent.

This revision of the traditional analysis is not some new idea of ours. It was forcefully argued for by John Hunter as early as 1784 (!), but Hunter was ignored. It was argued for again by the great Danish grammarian Otto Jespersen 140 years later, and Jespersen was similarly ignored. It was adopted widely by linguists in the 1970s, but the writers of descriptive grammars and dictionaries paid no attention.

The reluctance of traditional grammarians to follow the evidence might be due to their reverence for the historical source of the term ‘preposition’: in traditional Latin grammar a preposition is a word placed before a noun (or rather an NP, in our analysis). Maybe it seemed undesirable that the term should apply to any word NOT positioned before an NP. But this is mistaken reasoning, for three reasons.

- First, prepositions don’t always precede their objects even in traditional grammar: in *What are you looking for?* the preposition *for* is on its own (see §7.5 for more discussion of this construction).
- Second, various odd phrases like *left him for dead*, *tried in vain*, *kept secret till later*, and *left home for good* have prepositions with adjective complements rather than objects, and some phrases like *unknown until recently* have a preposition before an adverb.
- Third, no one ever seemed to worry that the etymology of ‘adverb’ suggests a word dependent on a verb, though the term applies also (as we’ve seen) to words modifying AdjPs, AdvPs, DPs, and PPs.

The term ‘preposition’ is so deeply ingrained in the grammatical tradition that a newly invented replacement would face strong resistance. We feel it’s far better to keep the familiar term but revise its definition. The property of occurring before an object NP still applies in many central cases, but there are numerous others where it doesn’t, so it shouldn’t be treated as definitional.

Further Extensions of the Preposition Category

Once we see that prepositions don’t necessarily have objects, we can see that a number of other words traditionally analysed as adverbs are much better

seen as prepositions. Some words behave like prepositions rather than adverbs but NEVER license objects. In [12] we give several that have locational meanings, occur as dependents in NPs, and occur as complements of a *be* VP; this is illustrated in [13]. These words should clearly be reassigned to the preposition category.

- [12] i *abroad downstairs here outdoors overboard overseas there*
 ii *ahead because instead*

- [13] DEPENDENT IN NOMINAL COMPLEMENT IN *be* VP
 i a. *You can use [the office downstairs].* b. *The spare chairs are downstairs.*
 ii a. *[Water instead of wine] won't do!* b. *This is instead of your usual lunch.*

- The words in [12i] normally occur without complements; four of them are compounds incorporating a core preposition (*down*, *out*, and *over*) as the first element.
- Those in [12ii] license complements with the form of PPs: *ahead of us*, *because of the weather*, *instead of the other one*.

7.3 Further Category Contrasts

The differences between prepositions and nouns are too obvious to merit further discussion, but it may be helpful to compare the syntactic properties of prepositions with those of adjectives and verbs – not with a view to redrawing the boundaries between these categories, but simply to clarify the differences between them.

7.3.1 Prepositions versus Adjectives

In the vast majority of cases, the evidence clearly separates prepositions from adjectives.

Objects

Prototypical members of the preposition category license objects. With one or two highly anomalous exceptions (*worth*, for example), adjectives do not.

Inflection and Gradability

Prototypical adjectives inflect for grade (with plain, comparative, and superlative forms such as *big*, *bigger*, *biggest*) or else have comparatives and superlatives marked by *more* and *most* (e.g., *useful*, *more useful*, *most useful*). More generally, they are **gradable**, accepting a range of degree modifiers – mostly AdvPs – including, most distinctively, *very* and *too* (in the sense “excessively”; see §6.1.3). Prepositions, by

contrast, are normally **non-gradable**. A limited number of PPs with specialized meanings are exceptions to this, and permit certain kinds of grading; examples are given in [14].

- [14] *at home with* NP (“familiar with NP” or “knowledgeable about NP”); *in control*; *in the know* (“informed”); *on edge* (“nervous”); *out of character* (“uncharacteristic”); *out of place* (“alien, strange”); *at sea* (“confused”); *in your element* (“fully comfortable”)

So we do find sentences like *You’re more at home with trigonometry than I am*, or *I feel more in control of the situation now*. However, the gradability doesn’t apply to the preposition by itself; it applies to the whole PP, so comparison in these cases is never marked inflectionally: we don’t say **You’re at home with trigonometry than I am*.

The Predicand Test

An important difference between adjectives and prepositions is revealed by a semantic fact about **adjuncts**. We have seen that in their predicative use, adjectives are related to a **predicand**, and this applies not only with predicative complements but also with predicative adjuncts (see §6.1.7). Prepositions, on the other hand, can always head adjuncts not associated with any predicand. The contrast is seen in the following examples:

- | | | |
|------|--|---|
| [15] | EXAMPLES WITH <i>keen</i> (ADJECTIVE) | EXAMPLES WITH <i>at</i> (PREPOSITION) |
| i | a. [<u>Keen</u> to make amends], the dean threw a big party for the students. | b. [<u>At</u> the end of the semester], the dean threw a big party for the students. |
| ii | a. * <u>Keen</u> to make amends, there was a big party for the students. | b. [<u>At</u> the end of the semester], there was a big party for the students. |

The bracketed constituents are adjuncts: an AdjP adjunct in [a] and a PP adjunct in [b]. We’ve marked [iia] as ungrammatical (though you could argue that it’s merely baffling semantically). The difference between [iia] and [iib] shows that the AdjP is subject to a constraint that does not apply to the PP: to be coherent, THE ADJP MUST BE RELATED TO A PREDICAND. This requirement is satisfied in [ia], where the predicand is the subject *the dean*: it’s the dean who was keen to make amends. But it’s not satisfied in [iia]: the adjunct is not related to a predicand, and hence there’s no indication of who was keen to make amends. The predicand would normally be the subject, but the dummy subject *there* (see §14.4.1) doesn’t denote anything that could be keen; *a big party* doesn’t either; and while students could in principle be keen to make amends, that interpretation makes no sense in this context.

We’re NOT claiming that adjuncts with the form of a PP CANNOT be related to a predicand: PPs like *out of his mind* have to be. The point we are relying on is that there is no general constraint that they MUST be. The *in* PP that begins [16i] does have a predicand, but the one that begins [16ii] does not:

- [16] i [In control of the situation at last,] Sue began to feel more relaxed.
 ii [In this country,] there is less than 5% unemployment.

In [i], the subject *Sue* provides a predicand for the bracketed adjunct: we understand it as telling us that Sue was in control of the situation at last. But there is no such relation in [ii]. So the preposition *in* can be the head of an adjunct that is not related to a predicand. And this holds quite generally for prepositions: they are not uniformly subject to the predicand constraint that applies to adjectives.

Complement in a *Become* VP

One of the main functions in which AdjPs appear is that of predicative complement – a complement licensed by such verbs as *be*, *appear*, *become*, *feel*, *seem*, etc. A high proportion of prepositions can head PPs functioning as complements of a *be* VP, but they occur less readily with the other verbs taking predicative complements. Most importantly, *become* is seldom acceptable with a PP complement. In general, if you take a PP that can be the complement of a *be* VP, you will find it cannot be the complement of a *become* VP, but with AdjPs there is never such a restriction:

- | | | |
|------|---|--|
| [17] | ADJP COMPLEMENTS | PP COMPLEMENTS |
| | i a. We <u>are</u> <u>grateful to you</u> . | b. We <u>are</u> <u>in your debt</u> . |
| | ii a. We <u>became</u> <u>grateful to you</u> . | b. *We <u>became</u> <u>in your debt</u> . |

Even PPs like *in a bad temper*, which are semantically very like adjectives, do not appear with *become*: we get *The boss became angry* but not **The boss became in a bad temper*.

Adding a modifier to a PP complement of a *become* VP may improve acceptability a great deal. For example, *??They became in love* is only marginally acceptable, but *They became more and more in love* is much better. We therefore need to formulate the distinction in this way: adjectives can normally head predicative complements licensed by *become*, whereas prepositions without modifiers normally cannot.

7.3.2 Prepositions versus Verbs

In general, it's easy to distinguish verbs from prepositions. Verbs function as lexical heads of clauses, and are easily recognizable as verbs by this function. There's no doubt about the status of *follow* as a verb in [18], for example:

- [18] a. We always follow the manual. b. I was just following the manual.

However, in a number of cases an item we classify as a preposition has the same shape as a participle: a historical change has led to a verb having a participle that takes on preposition properties in addition to its original properties, so it now

belongs to both categories. Three examples, with the relevant word underlined, are given in [19]:

[19]	PREPOSITION	VERB
i	a. <u>Following</u> the meeting, there will be a reception.	b. <u>Following</u> the manual, we tried to figure out how to assemble the unit.
ii	a. <u>Owing</u> to the drought, many farms are going bankrupt.	b. <u>Owing</u> so much to the bank, farmers can't afford any luxuries.
iii	a. They did remarkably well, <u>given</u> their inexperience.	b. They were <u>given</u> a chance to gain experience.

The difference is very similar to the requirement that we discussed above in distinguishing between adjectives and prepositions. Predicative adjectives must be semantically related to a predicand (what would traditionally be called an ‘understood subject’), and verbs heading VPs have to be related to a predicand, either overt in the subject or understood.

- In [ib] *following* heads a gerund-participial clause adjunct; this itself has no subject, but a predicand can be retrieved from the subject of the main clause: the sentence implies that *we* were following the manual.
- *Owing* in [iib] is interpreted in a similar way: it is farmers who owe so much to the bank. (See §14.2.2 for further discussion of this construction.)
- Example [iiib] is a passive clause, where the subject *they* is the predicand of *were given a chance to gain experience*.

But in the [a] examples, there is no such relationship to a predicand. The underlined words derive historically from verbs, but they have developed meanings distinct from the verb meanings, and in this use these words belong to the preposition category. *Following* X simply means “after X”; *owing* to X means “because of X”; and *given* X means roughly “if we take X into account”.

7.4 Grammaticized Uses of Prepositions

An important property that applies to about a dozen of the most frequent prepositions is that they have what we call **grammaticized** uses, as illustrated by the single-underlined prepositions in these examples:

- [20]
- i The article was written by a first-year student.
 - ii [The sudden death of the president] stunned the nation.
 - iii [Your criticism of her book] is quite unfair.
 - iv I [transferred several hundred dollars to them]
 - v [Their request for assistance] was ignored.
 - vi They all seem [quite keen on the idea].

The role of the underlined prepositions here is not to express spatial relations, as prepositions often do, but just to mark certain grammatical functions (which in [iv–vi] are as required by the double-underlined heads).

- Example [i] is a passive clause, and *by* marks the NP (*a first-year student*) corresponding to the subject of the corresponding active (*A first-year student wrote the article*).
- The bracketed sequence in [ii] is an NP within which *of* marks the NP (*the president*) that corresponds to the subject of the corresponding clause (*The president suddenly died*).
- Example [iii] is similar except that the complement in the *of* PP corresponds to the object in the corresponding clause (*You criticized her book*).
- *To*, *for*, and *on* in the PPs in [iv–vi] mark the complements of a verb (*transfer*), a noun (*request*), and an adjective (*keen*), respectively. These lexemes license a PP complement headed by a particular preposition: we say that the preposition is **specified** by the double-underlined head of the bracketed construction (see §7.7.2 below).

What makes ‘grammaticized’ an appropriate term for such prepositions is that where they are placed in sentences depends not on what they mean but entirely on rules of the grammar. The underlined prepositions in [20] don’t have any identifiable meaning of their own, and there is no possibility of replacing them by any other preposition.

In other examples, these same prepositions do have meaning, of course. In a sentence like *I sat by the door*, the word *by* expresses a relation of being fairly close to the door; in a sentence like *We went to Paris*, the word *to* indicates the endpoint in a process of movement; and so on. But in these cases we can replace them with prepositions of different meaning while keeping everything else the same: we could say *I sat opposite the door*, or *We went around Paris*. But it is not possible to make changes like this in [20] without changing the grammatical construction.

Only a few prepositions have grammaticized uses: basically *as*, *at*, *by*, *for*, *from*, *in*, *of*, *on*, *than*, *to*, and *with*. This is a small minority of the membership of the preposition category, but their grammaticized uses account for a huge proportion of the occurrences of prepositions in texts.

This property of occurring in grammaticized uses helps to distinguish the category as a whole from other categories, and suggests a moderately useful cross-linguistic definition of ‘preposition’, providing a basis for using the same term when describing other languages:

- [21] The term **preposition** applies to a relatively small category of words with basic meanings predominantly having to do with relations in space and time, containing among its prototypical members various grammaticized words that serve to mark particular grammatical functions.

7.5 Preposition Stranding

In certain non-canonical clause constructions, the complement of a PP may be positioned outside that PP, possibly a long distance away from the preposition instead of immediately following it. In the following examples the preposition is marked by double underlining, and what corresponds to its object is indicated by single underlining:

- [22] i Who did they vote for? [interrogative]
 ii This is the paper which she referred to. [relative]

The preposition is here said to be **stranded**, that is, located before a position from which its understood object is missing. It's a possibility also found in languages like Norwegian and Icelandic, but not in most languages.

What we mean when we say some constituent is 'understood as' the object of a preposition is straightforward to illustrate with interrogatives as in [i]: it expresses essentially the same question as *They voted for who?* (though the contexts in which you would choose one or the other might differ), and in that sentence *who* actually is the object in the *for* PP – it doesn't just correspond to it semantically.

An alternative to the stranding construction of [22] is available. It positions the whole PP at the beginning of the clause, so the preposition accompanies its object. We call this **preposition fronting**. The fronting alternatives to the sentences in [22] are shown in [23].

- [23] i For whom did they vote? [interrogative]
 ii This is the paper to which she referred]. [relative]

7.5.1 Choice between Stranding and Fronting Constructions

There are certain influences on the choice between stranding and fronting, and in certain cases one or the other is ungrammatical. Some of the relevant factors have to do with style, and others involve the choice of particular syntactic features of clauses.

Style

The fronted construction is decidedly more formal than the stranded one. This is especially true in **open interrogative** clauses:

- [24] STRANDED PREPOSITION FRONTED PREPOSITION
 a. *Where did this come from?* b. *°From where did this come?*

Version [a] is by far the more natural of the two; [b] sounds stiff and strange to most speakers. Open interrogatives with preposition fronting are heard in carefully prepared speech, such as scripted interview questions (*To what do you attribute this trend?*), but in ordinary conversation the stranding construction is strongly preferred.

Usage Controversy Note

Some very old-fashioned grammar advice sources actually repeat the ancient myth that preposition stranding is incorrect, or at least inelegant. (They invariably refer to it in terms of a preposition being ‘at the end of a sentence’, which is inaccurate; stranded prepositions may come at the end of a sentence, but often they don’t.) The intent is to try to get students to write sentences like those in [23] – to write in formal style rather than normal style.

The belief that stranding is ‘bad grammar’ is in massive conflict with actual usage. And the truth about sentences like those in [23] is that they are extremely formal, and in danger of seeming pompous. The stranded versions in [22] are overwhelmingly more natural.

All fluent users of Standard English use stranded prepositions, in writing as well as speech, and most usage books now recognize that. Stranding has been grammatical and commonplace in English throughout its history. Yet some writers still struggle desperately to avoid it, occasionally mangling their syntax as they try. One writer of a newspaper article wrote about **legislation cynically designed to be impossible with which to comply*, conjuring up an excrescent *which* in an effort to avoid writing the perfectly grammatical phrase *legislation cynically designed to be impossible to comply with*.

Syntactic Factors that Disfavour or Exclude Stranding

Although the traditional prescriptive warning about preposition stranding is nonsense, there are some syntactic circumstances (hardly ever mentioned in the books that call stranding bad grammar) that can make preposition stranding almost or completely impossible. We list a small sample of such circumstances in [25]:

[25]		STRANDED PREPOSITION	FRONTED PREPOSITION
i	a.	<i>*This is the safe [<u>which</u> the key <u>to</u> was stolen].</i>	b. <i>This is the safe [<u>to</u> <u>which</u> the key was stolen].</i>
ii	a.	<i>*I have a lecture ending at two, [<u>which</u> I’ll be free all day <u>after</u>].</i>	b. <i>I have a lecture ending at two, [<u>after</u> <u>which</u> I’ll be free all day].</i>
iii	a.	<i>*<u>What way</u> am I annoying you <u>in</u>?</i>	b. <i><u>In</u> <u>what way</u> am I annoying you?</i>

- In [ia], the stranded preposition occurs within a subject NP (the subject of the relative clause with the VP *was stolen*). That is clearly ungrammatical.
- In [ii], the PP is in adjunct rather than complement function, specifically an adjunct of time. There is a tendency for the stranding construction to be avoided in adjuncts generally. With adjuncts of place the tendency is not

nearly so strong, so you will certainly hear phrases like *the town [which I first met her in]*; but stranding is quite strongly disfavoured for many other adjuncts, such as those of time ([iia]), duration (*the movie which he had fallen asleep during*), and so on.

- Avoidance of the stranding construction is more than just a tendency with some fixed adjunct expressions: the manner adjunct *in what way*, as in [iiib], can never be split up by stranding.

Syntactic Factors that Disfavour or Exclude Fronting

Another thing that is never made clear by those who recommend against stranding prepositions is that there are syntactic circumstances in which the non-stranded version, with preposition fronting, is almost or completely impossible. Again we illustrate with just a few examples:

[26]	STRANDED PREPOSITION	FRONTED PREPOSITION
i	a. <i>It depends on [who I give it <u>to</u>].</i>	b. <i>*It depends on [<u>to whom</u> I give it].</i>
ii	a. <i><u>What</u> did you hit me <u>for</u>?</i>	b. <i>*<u>For what</u> did you hit me?</i>
iii	a. <i><u>Which metals</u> does it consist <u>of</u>?</i>	b. <i>?<u>Of which metals</u> does it consist?</i>

- In [i], the clause containing the preposition (bracketed) is a subordinate **open interrogative** clause functioning as the **complement** of a PP (headed by *on*); here stranding is obligatory.
- In [ii], we have the idiom *what for* meaning “why”, where *for* is never fronted.
- The verb *consist* in [iii] is one of those that license a PP complement with a specified preposition (like *transfer* in [20iv]), and there is a fairly strong preference for the stranding construction with such verbs. The [b] version isn’t grammatically forbidden, but it sounds extremely stiff and formal.

7.5.2 Stranding Where the Object Is Simply Missing

A special case of the stranding construction has the preposition understood with an object, but rather than being fronted the object is simply gone. This can be found in **relative** and **passive** clauses:

[27]	i <i>I can’t find the book [she was referring <u>to</u>].</i>	[relative]
	ii <i>This bed has been slept <u>in</u>.</i>	[passive]

The first is like [22ii] except that the relative pronoun *which* is omitted (see §11.1). The passive [ii] has *this bed* as subject, not object in the PP, as in the comparable active clause *Someone has slept in this bed*: this is not a case of omission such as we have in [i], but rather of a change in the function of the NP *this bed* (see §16.2.7).

7.6 The Structure of PPs

Prepositions function as heads of PPs, and those PPs can contain various dependents, both complements and modifiers.

7.6.1 Complements

Prepositions (under our view but not that of traditional grammar) license a range of complement types comparable to that of verbs:

- | | | | | |
|------|-----|-----------|---|---|
| [28] | i | OBJECT NP | <i>I was talking [<u>to a friend</u>].</i> | <i>I'm looking [<u>for my glasses</u>].</i> |
| | ii | PRED COMP | <i>I regard her [<u>as a friend</u>].</i> | <i>I took him [<u>for dead</u>].</i> |
| | iii | PP | <i>I stayed [<u>until after lunch</u>].</i> | <i>[<u>According to Ed</u>], it's a hoax.</i> |
| | iv | AdvP | <i>It won't last [<u>for long</u>].</i> | <i>I hadn't met her [<u>till recently</u>].</i> |
| | v | CLAUSE | <i>I left [<u>because I was tired</u>].</i> | <i>We agreed [<u>on how to proceed</u>].</i> |

Object and Predicative Complement

As with verbs, we need to make a distinction between objects and predicative complements: the *friend* examples in [i] and [ii] of [28] contrast in the same way as those in [29]:

- | | | | |
|------|----|--|-----------------------------|
| [29] | i | <i>I was visiting <u>a friend</u>.</i> | [OBJECT NP] |
| | ii | <i>I consider her <u>a friend</u>.</i> | [PREDICATIVE COMPLEMENT NP] |

The crucial syntactic difference, in both cases, is that a predicative complement can have the form of an AdjP (*I regard her [as very bright]*) or a bare role NP (*They elected her [as treasurer]*); see §4.4.1 for more discussion.

With almost all predicative complements in PP structure, the head preposition is *as*, but one or two verbs, such as *take*, license PP complements consisting of *for* plus a predicative NP, as in [28ii].

PPs

Prepositions license two kinds of PP complements.

- First, some prepositions which usually license objects also allow PP complements denoting times or places – compare *I stayed [until the afternoon]* (object) and *I stayed [until after lunch]* (PP complement). Other examples with PP complements of this sort are *from behind the curtain* and *since before lunch*.
- Second, there are prepositions that license PP complements with a specified head: a PP headed by *to* is licensed by prepositions like *according*, *due*, *owing*, *prior*, *pursuant*, etc.; an *of*PP is licensed by *ahead*, *because*, *instead*, *out*, etc.; a *from* PP is selected by *away*, *apart*, *aside*, etc.

AdvPs

A handful of Prep + AdvP combinations could be seen as prepositions followed by adverb phrases as complements. In addition to the ones in [28iv], we find *before long*, *for later*, *until recently*, and a few others. They are basically fixed phrases (for example, we get *before long* but not **after long*).

Subordinate Clauses

A number of prepositions license a **subordinate clause** complement. These include the prepositions that were traditionally classified as ‘subordinating conjunctions’, discussed at the beginning of §7.2.1 and listed in [5i] (*after*, *before*, etc.) and [5iia] (*although*, *because*, etc.).

Prepositions with No Complement

Although most PPs contain a complement, some prepositions sometimes or always occur without one. We can call these **intransitive prepositions** (following the terminology for verbs that don’t license objects). Some of these were mentioned above: *She went aboard* ([8ib]), *The spare chairs are downstairs* ([13ib]), and so on. Words like *away*, *back*, *here*, *home*, *now*, *out*, and *there* are also best categorized as intransitive prepositions.

7.6.2 Modification

Some of the main types of modification in the structure of PPs are illustrated in [30], where the modifiers are underlined and head prepositions are double-underlined:

- [30] i *We had to leave [a few minutes before the end].*
 ii *It landed [directly behind us].*
 iii *It all seemed [completely out of this world].*
 iv *You should go [straight home], [right now].*
 v *It was [way past midnight].*

- NPs measuring extent commonly occur with temporal and spatial prepositions, as shown in [i].
- Measurement of extent can also be expressed, by adverbs like *directly*, *just*, *shortly*, *soon*, etc., as in [ii].
- A number of PPs with non-locational meanings are gradable, and accept degree modifiers such as *completely*, *quite*, *very much*, etc., as in [iii]. So we get *completely out of his mind*, *quite in tune with my ideas*, *very much within the spirit of our policy*, etc.
- As illustrated in [iv] and [v], a few words such as *bang*, *right*, *straight*, and *way* can express intensified exactness of targeting for locations, or

completeness of traversal for paths, when they occur as adverbs in modifier function. We get *bang on target* but not **bang accurate*; *right on time* but not **right punctual*; *straight through the middle* but not **straight centrally*; and so on. These words can be used as a positive test for prepositions with locational or directional meanings: *Let's have lunch right here* confirms that *here* is a preposition, while **Let's have lunch right soon* confirms that *soon* isn't; *It went straight up* confirms that *up* is a preposition even when it has no object; **It went straight vertical* is ungrammatical because *vertical* is an adjective.

The Syntax of *Ago*

The word *ago*, as in *two weeks ago*, has the sort of meaning you'd expect for a temporal preposition taking an object that specifies a time interval (as in *since last week*), but it has to follow the time interval phrase: we don't get **ago two weeks*. Yet a phrase like *two weeks ago* appears exactly where we would expect a PP picking out a point in time. It can be a post-head modifier in an NP (*his rudeness two weeks ago*), and it can be the complement in a *be* VP (*That was two weeks ago*).

Some languages (like Hindi, Japanese, and Turkish) have words which have meanings just like prepositions but follow their complements. They're usually called postpositions. It's possible that *ago* in English is a postposition. But there is an alternative: we could say that it's a strictly intransitive preposition that always occurs with a pre-head modifier, namely a measure expression (see §5.2.2) specifying the length of time that has gone by. This way we would be treating the PPs in [31] in the same way (the head prepositions are underlined, and the measure-specifying modifiers are in the inner brackets):

- | | | |
|------|---|---------------------------------------|
| [31] | WITH MODIFIER | WITHOUT MODIFIER |
| i | <i>This all happened [400 miles <u>away</u>].</i> | <i>*This all happened away.</i> |
| ii | <i>The house was abandoned [years <u>back</u>].</i> | <i>*The house was abandoned back.</i> |
| iii | <i>The tenants left [some time <u>ago</u>].</i> | <i>*The tenants left ago.</i> |

The modifiers here all seem obligatory, because of an apparent strict requirement imposed by the meaning: it makes no sense to say something happened a certain length of time back in the past without saying what length of time it was: *left X amount of time ago* means nothing more than *left* if you don't specify the X, so the inclusion of the pointless extra word seems bizarre. What we're seeing here is apparently a semantic requirement so strong that it makes a measure-specifying modifier obligatory.

7.7 PP Complements in Clause Structure

PPs function as complements or modifiers in a range of phrases including VPs, NPs, and AdjPs. In this section we focus on those PPs functioning as internal complement in a VP, elaborating on the description of clause structure that was begun in [Chapter 4](#).

7.7.1 Goal, Source, and Location

PPs are the most usual form for complements indicating **goal**, **source**, and **location**. These are distinct from predicative complements. Goal and source are found in clauses expressing motion (or anything viewed metaphorically as motion). The source is the place from which something moves; the goal is the place to which it moves (not necessarily with the intention of doing so, as [\[32iv\]](#) indicates).

- [32] i *It came from beyond our galaxy.* [source]
 ii *We drove from Boston to Lincoln.*
 iii *Timmy jumped off the table into her arms.* } [source + goal]
 iv *Margaret fell into the pool.* [goal]

Goal and source PPs clearly qualify as complements since they need to be licensed by the verb – normally, a verb of motion. PPs expressing location complements are seen in examples like these:

- [33] i *The suitcase is underneath my bed.* } [location]
 ii *She stayed in her bedroom all morning.* }

7.7.2 Complements Licensed by Prepositional Verbs

We saw in [§7.4](#) that a dozen or so prepositions have grammaticized uses. Prominent among these are those where a particular preposition is **specified** by the head of the larger construction, by a verb, noun, or adjective. The term we use for verbs that demand specific prepositions following them is **prepositional verbs**. (The ill-suited term ‘phrasal verb’ is invariably used for these cases in English language teaching materials; we reject it for two simple reasons: the expressions involved are not phrasal and are not verbs.) They occur in a range of constructions, as illustrated in [\[34\]](#):

- [34] i *We’ll abide by your decision. He asked for water. I’m counting on her help.*
We came across some errors. The meal consisted of fruit and vegetables.
 ii *He accused her of fraud. I won’t hold it against you. He’ll treat me to lunch.*
She convinced us of her innocence. They supplied us with weapons.
 iii *That counts as satisfactory. She had passed for normal. I served as secretary.*
 iv *I regard that as unfair. They rated it as a success. She took me for a fool.*

The prepositions that begin the underlined PPs are not in contrast with other prepositions like those in [32–33]. The complement-licensing properties of the verbs specifically require a particular preposition as head of the complement.

- The examples in [34i] are all intransitive.
- Those in [ii] are transitive – the PP complement follows an object.
- In [iii–iv] the complement in the PP is predicative – again, this is evident from the possibility of its having the form of an AdjP or bare role NP.

Some verbs express radically different meanings when used with different specified prepositions: *looking after it* means “caring for it”; *looking at it* means “watching it”; *looking for it* means “seeking it”; and *looking into it* means “investigating it”.

Fossilization

Some verb + preposition combinations are fossilized, in the sense that they don’t permit any variation in their relative positions. An example of such a fossilized combination is *come + across*, meaning “find by chance”, as in *I came across some letters written by my grandmother*. It is contrasted in [35] with the non-fossilized combination *ask + for*, “request”:

[35]	NON-FOSSILIZED	FOSSILIZED
i	a. <i>I <u>asked for</u> some information.</i>	b. <i>I <u>came across</u> some letters.</i>
ii	a. <i>the information [<u>which I asked for</u>]</i>	b. <i>the letters [<u>which I came across</u>]</i>
iii	a. <i>the information [<u>for which I asked</u>]</i>	b. <i>*the letters [<u>across which I came</u>]</i>

The difference is illustrated in the relative-clause construction enclosed in brackets in [ii–iii]. These examples include relative clauses containing the relative pronoun *which* functioning as the object in a PP in [iii] and corresponding to one in [ii]. As we saw in §7.5, there are ordinarily two variants of this construction:

- In the **stranded** construction, *which* is fronted, and the preposition occurs after the verb and isn’t followed by an object. This is the variant shown in [ii].
- In the construction with a **fronted** preposition, the whole PP is fronted, as in [iii].

Both variants are permitted with *ask for*, but only the first is permitted with *come across*: [iiib] is not grammatical. The reason is that the second type of relative clause construction separates the preposition from the verb which specifies it, whereas fossilization doesn’t allow any departure from the fixed order of verb + preposition. The fronted preposition construction is not grammatically compatible with *come across* when fossilized with the meaning “find by chance”.

Similar fossilization is found in transitive clauses:

- | | | |
|------|--|--|
| [36] | NON-FOSSILIZED | FOSSILIZED |
| | i a. <i>He <u>accused</u> her <u>of</u> a crime.</i> | b. <i>I <u>let</u> him <u>off</u> some work.</i> |
| | ii a. <i>the crime [<u>which</u> he <u>accused</u> her <u>of</u>]</i> | b. <i>the work [<u>which</u> I <u>let</u> him <u>off</u>]</i> |
| | iii a. <i>the crime [<u>of</u> <u>which</u> he <u>accused</u> her]</i> | b. <i>*the work [<u>off</u> <u>which</u> I <u>let</u> him]</i> |

Let someone off, meaning “allow someone not to do”, is fossilized in that the preposition must follow the verb, with only the object intervening. So again, the stranded-preposition construction is permitted in both [iia] and [iib], whereas the fronted-preposition construction is permitted in [iiia] but not in [iiib] – another case where stranding, instead of being a grammar error, is obligatory.

7.7.3 Particles

We now look at a unique type of complement whose distinctive property is that it can freely come between the verb and its direct object, as well as after the object. Note, for example, the difference between *down* and *downstairs* in [37]:

- | | | |
|------|--|--|
| [37] | PARTICLE COMPLEMENT | NON-PARTICLE COMPLEMENT |
| | i a. <i>She took the box <u>down</u>.</i> | b. <i>She took the box <u>downstairs</u>.</i> |
| | ii a. <i>She took <u>down</u> the box.</i> | b. <i>*She took <u>downstairs</u> the box.</i> |

Both *down* and *downstairs* can follow the object, but only *down* can occur between a verb and its object, as in [ii] (recall that the preferred place for an object is directly after the head of the VP). *The box* in both [a] examples is an object in VP structure; it's not in a PP at all.

We use the term **particle** in the first instance for a kind of complement: *down* is functioning as a particle complement in [37], while *downstairs* is not. Derivatively, we can call a word a particle if it has the POTENTIAL to function as a particle complement.

Particles are all short words (one or two syllables), and they are nearly all prepositions, with just one or two exceptions, one being the adjective *clear*: compare *They made their intentions clear*, where it follows the object, with *They made clear their intentions*, where it precedes the object. (The class of relative words can also be seen as cutting across the primary lexical category boundaries in this way: recall that it contains pronouns such as *who* and *which*, prepositions such as *where*, and the adverb *why*.) Some of the most common prepositions that behave as particles are listed in [38]:

- | | | | | | | | |
|------|--------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|--------------|----------------|-----------|
| [38] | <i>along</i> | <i>away</i> | <i>back</i> | <i>by</i> | <i>down</i> | <i>forward</i> | <i>in</i> |
| | <i>off</i> | <i>on</i> | <i>out</i> | <i>over</i> | <i>round</i> | <i>under</i> | <i>up</i> |

Particles Never Precede Unstressed Personal Pronoun Objects

One general constraint on the order ‘particle + object’ is that it is inadmissible if the object has the form of a personal pronoun that does not bear stress. Stress is a phonological concept that we haven’t dealt with, but it’s not a difficult one. When someone says a phrase like *take it home* in a natural way, the last word *home* sounds longest and loudest; the word *take* is nearly as loud, but the *it* may be almost inaudible. We say that the syllables *take* and *home* are stressed, but the *it* is **unstressed**. An object occurrence of *it* is nearly always unstressed. We could write the phrase as *tàke it HÓME* to signal the second-heaviest and heaviest stress in the pronunciation, leaving *it* with no stress mark. And if we take [37ia] and replace *the box* by an unstressed *it*, we find that the particle placement possibilities have changed:

- [39] a. *She tòok it DÓWN.* b. **She tòok DÓWN it.*

The constraint here is that a particle has to follow an unstressed pronoun object in a VP; it must never precede it.

7.7.4 Verb-Based Idioms

An **idiom** is a combination of words whose meaning is not predictable from the meanings of its parts. It’s a lexical concept, not a grammatical one: short idioms nearly always appear in dictionaries, so that their unpredictable meanings can be explained. We’ll call an idiom beginning with a verb a **verb-based idiom**. There are huge numbers of familiar examples: *beat it* can mean “go away” (the verb has nothing to do with beating, and the *it* doesn’t refer to anything); *kick the bucket* can mean “die” (nothing to do with kicking water receptacles); *pull strings* can mean “exercise covert influence” (no strings or pulling actually involved); and so on. You can’t easily guess the meaning of these combinations just by knowing the meanings of the words as ordinarily used.

There are huge numbers of verb-based idioms in English, and many of them contain prepositions. Some of the examples you’ve already seen in this section contain verb-based idioms: *hold X [against Y]* in [34ii]; *come [across X]* in [35]; *let X [off Y]* in [36]; and so on. Other constructions that often contain such verb-based idioms are illustrated in [40]:

- [40] i *He finally backed down. Her dad passed away. When will you grow up? Cain and Abel eventually fell out. Do you think the idea will catch on?*
 ii *This ties in with my first point. I’m not going to put up with it any longer. Alex just gets by on her pension. You should make sure you stand up to him.*

- Those in [i] consist of a verb and a preposition alone as complement. Non-idiomatic examples of this combination are seen in *She came in* or *She went out*, where *in* and *out* are goal complements.

- The idioms in [ii] consist of a verb plus a lone preposition complement followed by a second PP complement with its own object. In *ties* [*in*] [*with my first point*] the verb *tie* has *in* as one complement and *with my first point* as another. A non-idiomatic example where the verb is followed by the same two prepositions is *She came* [*in*] [*with her uncle*].

Idioms Need Not Be Syntactic Constituents

Idiom is a LEXICAL concept. Idioms have to be listed and described in a dictionary of the language because of their particular form and special **idiomatic meanings**. But it would be a mistake to assume that what counts as a lexical unit will necessarily form a SYNTACTIC unit as well. The underlined expressions in [40i] do happen to be syntactic constituents: they are VPs with the verb as head and the PP (consisting of just the head preposition) as complement. But those in [40ii] are not; here the lexical and syntactic units do not match up.

Take the sentence *This ties in with my first point*. As we have said, *with* is a preposition taking *my first point* as its object, so *with my first point* forms a PP. Syntactically, the VP consists of three constituents: (1) *ties*, (2) *in*, and (3) *with your first point*. It does not consist of two constituents, *ties in with* and *your first point*. This is evident from the way the idiom behaves in the more formal relative-clause construction discussed above: *a point with which this ties in*, where the fronted *with which* is clearly a PP. Note also the possibility of inserting a modifier after *in*: *This ties in well with my first point*; you can't put a clause adjunct in the middle of a constituent, so *ties in with* can't be a constituent here.

More obvious are examples like *hold X against Y* from [34ii], since here the verb has an object which isn't part of the idiom and separates its two parts. *I won't hold it against you if you refuse* has a special idiomatic meaning associated with the use of the verb *hold* together with the preposition *against* (roughly, *hold it against you* means "judge you negatively"), but there is no syntactic constituent consisting solely of *hold* and *against*: they aren't even adjacent in the sequence of words.

The important thing about idioms, then, is that they have special and unpredictable meanings, but THAT IS THE ONLY RESPECT IN WHICH THEY ARE SPECIAL. They do not also constitute special syntactic units with peculiar structure. In syntactic structure they are generally quite ordinary and often identical to the structure the same sequence of words has when the meaning is the literal and predictable one.

7.8 Prepositional Idioms and Fossilization

In the last section we were concerned with verb-based idioms – idioms beginning with a verb. There are also a large number of prepositional idioms – idioms

beginning with a preposition. In particular, we examine here a sample of expressions with the form preposition + noun + preposition that are idiomatic in meaning and largely or wholly fossilized in syntax. Examples are given in [41i–ii], which contrast with the ordinary sequences in [iii]:

- [41] i by means of hard work on behalf of my son with effect from today
 ii by virtue of her age in front of the car in league with the devil
 iii in photos of their parents to questions of ethics with knowledge of his goals

Fossilization means that the parts cannot be varied independently as freely as in ordinary sequences. One reflection of this is that we cannot drop the first preposition in [i–ii], to yield NPs that can be used elsewhere, though we can do this in [iii]:

- [42] i *Means of hard work enabled her to pass the exam.
 ii *Virtue of her age led them to drop the charges.
 iii Photos of their parents were lying on the table.

The expressions *photos of their parents*, *questions of ethics*, and *knowledge of his goals* are obviously NPs which in [41iii] happen to be functioning as the object in a PP but which can also appear in the normal range of NP functions, such as the subject in [42iii].

The analysis of [41i–ii], however, is much less obvious. Many writers treat the underlined sequences here as syntactic units, commonly called ‘complex prepositions’. The motivation for this lies in the meaning: *in front of the car* is semantically comparable to *behind the car*, and this tempts grammarians to see *in front of* as an element of the same kind as *behind*, only more complex in its internal structure. But again, these are LEXICAL units, not syntactic ones. Semantic relations of this kind do not provide a reliable guide to syntactic analysis.

For examples like those in [41i] there is compelling evidence that the structure is the same as for [41iii], with the first preposition taking an NP as object. Notice that the noun can take pre-head dependents:

- [43] *by similar means on my son's behalf with immediate effect*

These show that the fossilization is only partial. The changes made here demonstrate clearly that the sequences following the first preposition are bare NPs, not components of multi-word prepositions. If *by means of* were really a single preposition, we shouldn't be able to insert *similar* after the first part of it and drop the last part to get *by similar means*. If *on behalf of* or *on behalf* were prepositions we wouldn't be able to insert a genitive determiner as in *on my son's behalf*. And so on.

We can't always present such evidence: changes of a comparable kind are not possible in [41ii], where the degree of fossilization is greater. A case could perhaps

be made for treating the first two words (*by virtue*, *in front*, and *in league*) as a complex word in each case – rather like *each other* or *a few* – and saying that these complex words license *of*-PP complements. Under that view, *in front of the car* would have the complex preposition *in front* as head and *of the car* as complement. But that is very different from taking *in front of* as a whole to be a complex preposition. The *of* in *in front of the car* definitely belongs with *the car*, not with *in front*. This is evident from the fact that if we omit *the car* when it's retrievable from the context, we must also drop the *of*:

- [44] i *She wasn't behind the car, she was in front.*
 ii **She wasn't behind the car, she was in front of.*

From a syntactic point of view, it's not *in front of* that behaves like *behind*, but just *in front*; it differs from *behind* in that it (optionally) licenses a complement with *of*, rather than an NP.

The same general point applies to the second preposition in the other sequences in [41ii].

- Take *in league with*. We can have *The two of them are in league with the devil* or just *The two of them are in league* (understood as “in league with each other”). This shows that from a syntactic point of view *with* belongs in the first instance with the following NP, not with *league*.
- In *by virtue of her age* we cannot omit *of her age*, but we can still show that *of* forms a PP with *her age*. One piece of evidence is that the *of* can be repeated in coordination, as in *by virtue of her age and of her family commitments*. The coordinator *and* here is linking the two constituents that are underlined. They are PPs. And that means *by virtue of* is not a preposition, not a syntactic unit of any sort (though possibly *in league* and *by virtue* are complex prepositions in the way that *in front* could be).

Exercises on Chapter 7

1. For each of the following sentences (all from the opening pages of Mary Shelley's novel *Frankenstein*), underline the **complement** of the doubly underlined **preposition** – all the words that make up the complement, but no other words. In each case give the category of the complement.
 - i *What may not be expected in a country of eternal light?*
 - ii *Six years have passed since I resolved on my present undertaking.*
 - iii *I commenced by inuring my body to hardship.*
 - iv *I preferred glory to every enticement that wealth placed in my path.*
 - v *They fly quickly over the snow in their sledges.*

2. Determine which of the verbs below belong to the category of **prepositional verbs**. For those that do, identify the preposition(s) they select and provide relevant examples. (Do this exercise with the help of a good dictionary.) For each verb + preposition sequence say whether or not it is **fossilized**, and provide evidence that your claim about fossilization is correct.

- i *bank*
- ii *believe*
- iii *convince*
- iv *fall*
- v *feel*
- vi *hope*
- vii *see*
- viii *stand*
- ix *treat*
- x *wait*

3. The word *up* is functioning as a **particle complement** in *We folded up the map* but not in *We climbed up the mountain*. What syntactic differences can you find between the two constructions? Use these differences to say, for each of the following, which of the two kinds of construction it belongs to.

- i *I looked over my shoulder.*
- ii *We must bring in the washing.*
- iii *We'd better run off some more copies.*
- iv *I knocked over the vase.*
- v *He never got over his disappointment.*

4. [Supplementary exercise] List ten word sequences other than the ones discussed in this chapter that are standardly described (or could plausibly be taken) as 'complex prepositions'. Provide evidence for their degree of fossilization, classifying them as **LESS FOSSILIZED** (like the cases in [41i] of this chapter, e.g., *by means of*) or **MORE FOSSILIZED** (like those in [41ii]).
5. For each of the following words, decide whether it is a **preposition** or an **adjective**, and give arguments to support your view: [i] *about*; [ii] *ahead*; [iii] *aloof*; [iv] *aloft*; [v] *around*.
6. [Supplementary exercise] How does *ago* differ from a more typical preposition such as *in*? Would it be better to regard it not as we do in this chapter but instead as a preposition with the special property of always following its complement?

7. [Supplementary exercise] We analyse both *after* and *onward* as prepositions. What prepositional properties do they share?
8. [Supplementary exercise] We take *near* to be both a preposition and an adjective. Assuming we're wrong, which category would you say it should really belong to? Present evidence to support your position.
9. Which of the following **prepositions** can occur in **declarative main clauses** both with and without an NP complement? Give examples to illustrate both uses, noting those which occur without an NP complement only in a restricted subset of their uses / meanings:
- i *against*
 - ii *between*
 - iii *despite*
 - iv *inside*
 - v *opposite*
 - vi *throughout*
 - vii *to*
 - viii *underneath*
 - ix *until*
 - x *within*
10. The following examples have **stranded** prepositions. Construct corresponding examples with a **fronted** preposition. If you find any of your examples ungrammatical, mark them with * in the usual way.
- i *They couldn't agree on who it referred to.*
 - ii *What am I supposed to cut this thing with?*
 - iii *They're the person I showed the photo to.*
 - iv *The place we're going to is so informal they don't have tablecloths.*
 - v *It was the only proposal which every department member agreed with.*
11. The following examples have **fronted** prepositions. Construct corresponding examples with a **stranded** preposition. If the example turns out to be ungrammatical, mark it with *.
- i *Under what circumstances would you agree?*
 - ii *In what year was she born?*
 - iii *He came to the bed in which Goldilocks had been sleeping.*
 - iv *It appealed to everyone with whom he discussed it.*
 - v *It was a situation in which it would have been hard for anyone to form a judgement concerning what to do.*

12. Classify the following words as **adverbs** or **prepositions**, basing your answers on the criteria discussed in **Chapter 7** and citing the relevant evidence: [i] *ahead*; [ii] *always*; [iii] *indoors*; [iv] *often*; [v] *overseas*; [vi] *downtown*; [vii] *home*; [viii] *early*; [ix] *where*; [x] *sometimes*.
13. Explain how Standard English would differ from these non-standard constructions.
- i *Place your right foot to the mat.
 - ii *Even you don't have to go to the bathroom, be sure to take breaks.
 - iii *What for should we do this?
 - iv *Get some rest, Vincent. You look like tired.
 - v *This concerns about the role of the editor in light of the project's *final chapter*.
 - vi *I guess it depends of how you look at it.
 - vii *I'm not going out now, but I'm coming pub later.
 - viii *I need you to get out my house.
 - ix *I went to school for be a teacher.
 - x *We walk to the station and then we go train.
14. Are the underlined phrases predicative OF THE SUBJECT of the clause?
- i Brea had never thought of immuno-sharing as human.
 - ii As a young man, Gogy had been exiled from his Dharawal homelands.
 - iii She's feeling under the weather and isn't receiving guests, per se.
 - iv It shocked me to learn that my grandmother had to pass as white to work in a laundromat in the 1930s.
 - v The reason I bring up this new comic is because it's very important to me.
 - vi The relationship between the MS and these root apices is of clinical importance.
 - vii With the agenda still up in the air, major players like Saudi Arabia are noncommittal about attendance.
 - viii The gluten-free, no sugar-added, vegan varieties range from mild to wild.
 - ix I could see why some of the boys took him for snobby.
 - x They were over the moon with the success of the vaccine.
15. Determine if the underlined preposition is functioning as a particle. Provide evidence.
- i Here's another place you can go to get off the treadmill.
 - ii I looked up to see an aggressively healthy young person beaming down at me.
 - iii I noticed it this morning, when I brought the laundry in.

- iv *I spent a lot of time looking up conversions and hunting for recipes I could understand.*
 - v *It has never chewed up my shoes or drunk out of the toilet.*
 - vi *It will make you blush as if you're an eight-year-old getting chewed out by a grouchy old man.*
 - vii *The carp eat up to three times their weight in aquatic grass daily.*
 - viii *The data can help you figure out fictional countries in your favorite dystopian novels.*
 - ix *You're gonna need to set up the locations and pay off the right people.*
 - x *You took my hand and said let's go get you fixed up.*
16. [Supplementary exercise] Construct an example, complete with as much context as necessary, to show that when the context is right a pronoun can FOLLOW the particle in a **verb + particle** construction like *rip you off* or *call him out* or *turn them down*, if it is stressed.
17. Which of the underlined sequences is a PP?
- i *According to the Gizmodo report, some Google employees are not taking the news well.*
 - ii *Aural culture takes the form of teenagers uninhibitedly singing along with records.*
 - iii *But for the time he became the extra-large lady lover by the nickname of Sexual Chocolate, Mark Henry has usually been cast as a powerful monster.*
 - iv *During the day, Radio 3 strode about in a corduroy jacket.*
 - v *He was in many bullish magazine covers just prior to the bear attack.*
 - vi *I'd chop a section out of that stump to show to the folks at the game department.*
 - vii *It is an opportunity to get nerdy about the astronomical facts alluded to in the lyrics.*
 - viii *Just when you thought you were fed up with surfing movies, along comes one that makes it worth taking another plunge.*
 - ix *Nearly all the waves we deal with in this course are nondispersive.*
 - x *The horrendous details are just ahead on American Morning.*

8

Adjuncts: Modifiers and Supplements

8.1 Introduction

In this chapter we provide a brief overview of the ways in which clause structure may be elaborated or embellished by constituents in **adjunct** function. We divide adjuncts into two kinds: **modifiers**, which are thoroughly integrated into the syntactic structure of clauses, and what we call **supplements**, which are much more loosely connected to the sentences in which they're found.

You'll find considerable disagreement on terminology between different grammars. Adjuncts in general, and particularly modifiers in clause structure, are often called 'adverbials'. This is a misleading term, because it suggests some connection to the adverb category, though there is none (adjuncts can be NPs or PPs or AdjPs or clauses). And supplements are often called 'parentheticals' because of the way they are quite often (like this one) printed in round parentheses.

The last five chapters have been structured around categories, but now we're focusing on a single very general syntactic function with a broad array of subtypes, realized by a wide range of constituents of different categories. We'll be mainly concerned with semantics: there is some correlation between semantic roles and syntax, which allows us to make a number of general syntactic observations, but meaning contribution is the primary way in which adjunct types differ. The present chapter may be helpful in working out how particular ideas can be expressed.

Three difficulties complicate the task of completing a comprehensive survey of all the kinds of adjuncts.

- The boundary between adjuncts and complements is not perfectly sharp. We've already seen in the [previous chapter](#) that complements are closely associated with heads licensing them (determining whether their presence is required or permitted), while adjuncts convey more loosely connected meaning modifications and are almost always optional; but some constituents that can serve as adjuncts can also function as complements, while making a very similar semantic contribution.
- Listing all the possible ways in which the meaning of a clause can be modified would be a task with no clear endpoint: there is no limit to how fine-grained

a semantic classification could get, so any list of semantic adjunct types can always be further refined.

- The distinguishable kinds of adjuncts sometimes overlap: a single constituent can have multiple semantic roles. For example, we'll see later in this chapter that **conditional** adjuncts and **reason** adjuncts can also be **speech-act** adjuncts, and the peculiar construction we call the **exhaustive conditional** mingles aspects of the meanings of interrogatives and conditionals.

This chapter, therefore, does not pretend to be comprehensive. Our aim is merely to identify some of the most central and important semantic types of adjunct, concentrating on cases where there are generalizations about their syntax, not merely fine differences in shades of meaning.

We classify adjuncts under fourteen headings, illustrated in [1], where the adjuncts in each example are underlined. All but the last two are punctuated as modifiers, though most could occur as supplements instead, which could be signalled by adding commas.

[1]	i	MANNER, MEANS, AND INSTRUMENT	<i>The prime minister played a bad hand <u>badly</u>.</i>
	ii	ACT-RELATED	<i><u>Foolishly</u> I opened the door.</i>
	iii	LOCATIONAL (SPACE)	<i>The cat sat and watched <u>near the window</u>.</i>
	iv	TEMPORAL (TIME)	<i>Get it sorted out <u>right now</u>.</i>
	v	DEGREE, INTENSITY, AND EXTENT	<i>He was right <u>to an astonishing extent</u>.</i>
	vi	PURPOSE, REASON, AND RESULT	<i>The saucepans are there <u>to be used</u>.</i>
	vii	CONCESSIVE	<i>It's outside <u>although it isn't in the sun</u>.</i>
	viii	CONDITIONAL	<i>It'll do better <u>if it gets some sun</u>.</i>
	ix	DOMAIN	<i><u>Artistically</u> it was a real success.</i>
	x	MODAL	<i><u>In all probability</u> you don't want to see this.</i>
	xi	EVALUATIVE	<i><u>Fortunately</u> no one was hurt.</i>
	xii	SPEECH ACT	<i><u>Frankly</u> I couldn't care less.</i>
	xiii	CONNECTIVE	<i>This, <u>however</u>, turned out to be bad advice.</i>
	xiv	SUPPLEMENT	<i>Paul – <u>and this worries me</u> – doesn't agree.</i>

An adjunct can be negative, in the sense that it negates the whole clause that includes it clauses like *They never came back, did they?* and *In no way do I want to discourage you* are made negative by the presence of the underlined adjuncts. But further discussion of this point is left almost entirely to [Chapter 9](#).

8.1.1 Degrees of Integration

The order in which the types are listed in [1] corresponds roughly to the typical degree of syntactic integration of the underlined material. Semantic adjunct types coming earlier in the list are generally built more tightly into the syntactic structure of the clause; those coming later in the list are more free-floating in both syntactic and

PPs can often be used to query other kinds of adjunct: *Under what conditions would you resign?* in effect queries a conditional adjunct (it invites an answer to fill in the open part of *I would resign if ...*); *With respect to what subject is she an expert?* invites an answer stating what she is an expert in; and so on.

8.2 Manner, Means, and Instrument

Manner adjuncts generally take the form of AdvPs or PPs. These very common adjuncts are modifiers, tightly integrated with the VP and associated very clearly with the meaning of the verb. The usual position for them is toward the end of the VP; it is relatively uncommon, often ungrammatical, to front them:

- [3] i *The choir sang 'Jerusalem' very badly.*
 ii **Very badly, the choir sang 'Jerusalem'.*
 iii *The books were arranged alphabetically by author's surname.*
 iv **Alphabetically, the books were arranged by author's surname.*

Usage Controversy Note

Books on writing often suggest that it will improve your writing if you get rid of 'adjectives and adverbs'. They mean adjectives and adverbs in modifier function; they seem to have forgotten about AdjPs in predicative complement function, which usually can't be eliminated without making the sentence ungrammatical (you can't avoid the adjective in *This seems ridiculous* by writing **This seems*).

The aim of the advice seems to be to persuade budding writers to eliminate unnecessary descriptive modifiers of nouns and verbs and choose more expressive verbs or nouns instead: instead of *very hot fire*, you would write *inferno*. The trouble is that in most cases no noun or verb could have been chosen to make the modifier redundant. You could perhaps avoid the adjective *huge* in *a huge creature* by writing *a monster*, but you can't eliminate adjectives like *purple* or *transatlantic* by finding a single noun meaning "purple plumage" or "transatlantic flight". You could perhaps substitute *The books were alphabetized* for *The books were arranged alphabetically*, eliminating one adverb, but you're not going to be able to get rid of *sympathetically* by finding a verb meaning "listen sympathetically", or eliminate *reluctantly* by choosing a verb meaning "volunteer reluctantly".

All normal English prose contains adjectives and adverbs: very roughly, about 6 per cent of the words in normal fiction or news writing are likely to be adjectives, and roughly another 5 per cent will be adverbs (academic writing uses rather more, and conversation somewhat fewer). While some writing might be improved by reducing the number of adjuncts, blanket instructions like 'avoid adjectives' or 'never use adverbs' are bad advice – indeed, frankly silly.

8.3 Act-Related Adjuncts

Some adjuncts convey a characterization of the whole act described by a clause, not the action or state identified by the verb. We call these **act-related** adjuncts.

- [4] *Foolishly, I opened the door when I smelled smoke.*

What is being described as foolish here is not the exact manner in which I opened the door: it's a fairly easy operation, and it's not clear how it could be done in a foolish way. What's identified as foolish is the act of doing it – of opening a door behind which there may be a fire.

Act-related adjuncts – typically modifiers – may be positioned between the subject and verb (*I foolishly opened the door*). They can also appear at the beginning of the clause, as in [4], or at the end, if they are treated as supplements and set off with a comma or dash (*I opened the door – foolishly*).

The reason that [3ii] cannot be understood as act-related is that bad singing is inherent in the manner or skill of the singing itself. The clause-initial position of the adjunct just makes the sentence sound as if a manner adjunct has been put in a very odd position, rather than forcing an act-related interpretation. Some adverbs, however, have a meaning that can easily be interpreted in either way:

- [5] i *They spoke rudely only to him, not to her.*
 ii *Rudely, they spoke only to him, not to her.*

The difference is that [5i] says that they spoke in a rude way (though only to the man); [5ii] says something very different: that it was a rude act to have limited their (possibly very polite) conversation to the man and ignored the woman.

Act-related adjuncts are typically expressed with adverbs. Some of them have a specific semantic connection to the subject of the clause, expressing volition (a deliberate act of will) on the part of whoever the subject refers to:

- [6] i *The mayor reluctantly preceded the marching band.* [reluctant mayor]
 ii *The marching band reluctantly followed the mayor.* [reluctant band]

For the mayor to precede the band is the same thing as for the band to follow the mayor, but [6i] and [6ii] do not have the same meaning.

8.4 Space and Time

It is very common for sentences to contain adjuncts identifying information about locations, directions, sources, goals, or paths of movement in either space or time, and these tend to be PPs.

- [7] i *Near the window* stood a sickly-looking aspidistra. [location]
 ii *After a while they drifted off* toward town. [direction]
 iii *Strange sounds were heard* from under the floor. [source]
 iv *I'm going on another trip – this time* to Antarctica! [goal]
 v *A red stripe had been painted* right along the corridor. [path]

The constituents that serve as adjuncts of these types can be complements in some cases. For example, verbs like *put* license a location phrase as an obligatory second complement, as seen in [8], and verbs like *head* require a direction phrase, as seen in [9]:

- [8] i **I want you to put the flowers*.
 ii *I want you to put the flowers* in the middle of the table.
 [9] i **At sundown, the cowboys tended to head*.
 ii *At sundown, the cowboys tended to head* for the saloon.

Also very common are adjuncts relating to points or regions in the time dimension, specifying hours of the day, days of the week, dates, intervals, durations, and other properties of the way events are related to time:

- [10] i *It will start* at 3 o'clock. [time]
 ii *I'll see you* on the 23rd. [date]
 iii *It all happened* while I was learning sumo. [interval]
 iv *They were at it* for a long time. [duration]

Words like *still* and *already* express properties of the internal structures of events, rather in the way we saw aspect modifying temporal structure in Chapter 3.

- [11] *We were* still *eating but the staff were* already *starting to close the restaurant*.

What *still* conveys in [11] is that our eating continued longer than expected and into the closing-up operations; and what *already* conveys is that the period of the staff's beginning their restaurant-closing activities began unexpectedly or surprisingly early.

Adverbs like *often* and *repeatedly* specify frequency of occurrence (*I often get unsolicited friending requests*), and *again* makes a reference to the serial order of events (*My ex has contacted me yet again*).

Many of the basic adverbs (the ones that are not derived by adding *-ly* to an adjective base) are used as temporal adjuncts: *already*, *always*, *early*, *later*, *never*, *nowadays*, *often*, *seldom*, *sometimes*, *soon*, *still*, etc.

Many different prepositions that have meanings originally relating to space are adapted via metaphor to refer to time instead: around the turn of the century, at the right moment, from early morning, in a minute or two, into the following week, on the same day, to 2015, toward evening, etc. Specialized purely temporal prepositions like *during*, *now*, *since*, and *while* are not so numerous.

8.5 Degree

Many adjuncts – typically modifiers – express the degree to which something holds: they express some quantity, extent, amount, magnitude, or intensity. In [12] we give a representative sample. Notice the variety of categories, functions, and modified constituents involved.

- | | | | |
|------|-----|--|-------------------------|
| [12] | i | <i>I <u>very much</u> regret I ever said that.</i> | [AdvP modifier in VP] |
| | ii | <i>This is <u>totally</u> ridiculous.</i> | [AdvP modifier in AdjP] |
| | iii | <i>The regulation was introduced <u>rather</u> sneakily.</i> | [AdvP modifier in AdvP] |
| | iv | <i>The ship was <u>almost</u> out of sight.</i> | [AdvP modifier in PP] |
| | v | <i>They shouted <u>enough to wake the baby</u>.</i> | [AdvP modifier in VP] |
| | vi | <i>We should change the wording <u>a little bit</u>.</i> | [NP modifier in VP] |
| | vii | <i>I don't think it matters <u>at all</u>.</i> | [PP modifier in VP] |

8.6 Purpose, Reason, and Result

Sometimes people do things with a purpose, in order to achieve some goal. They also sometimes have reasons: I can do something that some earlier event or circumstance encourages me or impels me to do. And events also have results: I can do something that makes something else happen. There are adjuncts of various forms to express all three of these relations between events.

Purpose is usually expressed by means of either a PP or a clause. The most common constructions are the ones shown in [13]. All are possible ways of saying roughly the same thing.

- | | | | |
|------|-----|---|---|
| [13] | i | <i>Open the wine <u>to let it breathe</u>.</i> | [infinitival clause] |
| | ii | <i>Open the wine <u>in order to let it breathe</u>.</i> | [PP: <i>in</i> + <i>order</i> + infinitival clause] |
| | iii | <i>Open the wine <u>in order that it can breathe</u>.</i> | [PP: <i>in</i> + <i>order</i> + tensed clause] |
| | iv | <i>Open the wine <u>so it can breathe</u>.</i> | [PP: <i>so</i> + tensed clause] |
| | v | <i>Open the wine <u>so as to let it breathe</u>.</i> | [PP: <i>so</i> + <i>as</i> + infinitival clause] |

The content of the subordinate clause is not entailed: you may have opened the red wine to let it breathe, but that does not mean that it did breathe (you might fall backwards into the pool while still holding the bottle).

Reason is generally expressed with PPs headed by prepositions like *because* or *since*, as in [14i–ii], or in formal style *as* or *for*, as in [14iii–iv].

- | | | |
|------|-----|---|
| [14] | i | <i>I can't play <u>because I've got to work</u>.</i> |
| | ii | <i><u>Since you're an expert</u>, take a look at this.</i> |
| | iii | <i><u>As high winds are forecast</u>, the road is closed.</i> |
| | iv | <i>Angus wore black, <u>for they were in mourning</u>.</i> |

Reason adjuncts differ from purpose adjuncts in that the content of a subordinate clause complement in the PP is entailed: if I say truthfully that I can't play because I've got to work, then it must be true that I've got to work.

Both purposes and reasons can be queried using the adverb *why* as the interrogative word:

- [15] i *Why did you open the wine?* [purpose is queried]
 ii *Why can't you play?* [reason is queried]

Result is expressed by PP adjuncts of the form *so* + clause or *with the result that* + clause:

- [16] i *He was very frail, so that operating on him was judged to be unsafe.*
 ii *He dropped it, with the result that it stopped working.*

There is a significant difference between result adjuncts introduced by *so that* and purpose adjuncts similarly introduced: they cannot be fronted. In fact, they have to be at the end of the clause they modify. Putting the underlined adjunct of [16i] at the beginning would force a very strange purpose meaning (that in order to ensure that operating on him would be judged unsafe, he somehow ensured that he remained frail).

8.7 Concessives

Conceding a point means acknowledging (typically with some reluctance) that it is correct. English uses PPs headed by the historically related prepositions *though* and *although* as adjuncts expressing concessions:

- [17] i *He went to school in Paris, though his French isn't particularly good.*
 ii *Although I disapproved, I decided not to say anything.*

Although and *though* are both prepositions that can take clause complements (see §7.2) and are identical in meaning, but they differ syntactically in one respect: *although* is solely a preposition, whereas *though* is also an adverb that can function as a supplementary connective adjunct (see §8.10) at any of a number of points in an independent clause. So the two-sentence sequences in [18i–ii] convey the same meaning as the single sentence in [18iii]:

- [18] i *He went to school in Paris. His French, though, isn't very good.* [Adv]
 ii *He went to school in Paris. His French isn't very good, though.* [Adv]
 iii *He went to school in Paris, though his French isn't very good.* [Prep]

The prepositions *despite* (as in *Despite his education, he didn't know much*) and *contrary* (as in *Contrary to popular belief, polar bears enjoy warm weather*) have oppositional meanings that are somewhat similar (*despite* X means “although

X might have led you to think otherwise”; *contrary* has almost the same meaning but takes a PP headed by *to*).

8.8 Conditionals

There is a particularly important class of adjuncts that express conditions under which the main part of the clause holds. The central word here is the preposition *if*.

- [19] i *If you build it, he will come.*
 ii *I wouldn't do that if I were you.*
 iii *If I had been there, perhaps I could have done something.*

We analyse this use of *if* as a preposition (see §7.2; traditional grammars call it a ‘subordinating conjunction’, as if it were comparable with *that* and *whether*, but unlike them it makes a clear contribution to meaning). Other relevant prepositions heading conditional adjunct PPs include *given*, *provided*, and *unless*.

- [20] i *Given that you're so opposed to it, you can't call yourself unbiased.*
 ii *I'll go along with it provided there's a get-out clause in the contract.*
 iii *Don't say that unless you mean it.*

Conditional adjuncts are usually supplements. They can be freely positioned at the end or the beginning of the main clause, or may interrupt it:

- [21] *You could, if you wanted, get a bus all the way there.*

8.8.1 Exhaustive Conditionals

There is a special kind of adjunct, related to conditionals, that we call the **exhaustive conditional**. The bracketed parts of the sentences in [22] illustrate it.

- [22] i *We'll go ahead [whether you turn up or not].*
 ii *We'll go ahead [regardless of whether you turn up].*
 iii *We'll go ahead [irrespective of whatever people say].*
 iv *We'll go ahead [no matter what people say].*

This kind of adjunct is **non-restrictive**, so you could leave out the bracketed parts without changing the truth of what the sentences say, which is simply that we're going ahead. The underlined parts are semantically related to interrogative content clauses (which we treat in Chapter 11; it might be useful to come back to this section after reading that chapter). As always with interrogative clauses, there are closed and open types: [i] and [ii] have closed interrogatives, and [iii] and [iv] have open interrogatives.

In [i] the adjunct consists simply of a closed interrogative content clause. This is only possible when an *or* is included (note that **We'll go ahead whether you turn up* is not grammatical).

The bracketed parts in [22] have something in common with conditional adjuncts as well as interrogative clauses. They use an interrogative clause to introduce a question whose answers covers all possibilities, and then they assert that it doesn't matter which of these you might set as a condition. Hence our term 'exhaustive conditional'.

For example, *whether you turn up or not* in [i] makes the same meaning contribution as "if either you do turn up or you do not turn up" – two conditions that together exhaust all the possible situations. And in [iv], *no matter what people say* covers an open range of possibilities (all the possible answers to the question "What do people say?"), and says that none of them matter. So [iv] entails that we'll go ahead under all possible conditions.

8.9 Four Other Clause-Modifying Adjuncts

We will group together four other distinguishable kinds of adjunct that modify clauses, very often positioned at the beginning of the clause. They are referred to traditionally as 'sentence adverbs', but we don't use that term, for two reasons: (i) they modify clauses rather than sentences, and (ii) they are not all adverbs (some are PPs or NPs). The four types are:

- **domain** adjuncts, which limit the domain within which the clause content applies;
- **modal** adjuncts, making contributions rather like those of modal verbs;
- **evaluative** adjuncts, which express subjective evaluations of the clause content; and
- **speech-act** adjuncts, which qualify the intent of the act of uttering the sentence. (For more discussion of speech acts, see §10.1.)

These are abstract characterizations. It will be much easier to grasp what they mean if we consider some specific examples.

8.9.1 Domain Adjuncts

An adverb or PP adjunct can be used to limit a claim to the musical arena:

- [23] i *Musically, Johnny was brilliant.*
 ii *As far as guitar-playing is concerned, Johnny was a genius.*

Semantically, adjuncts of this sort limit the domain within which the rest of the clause is to be understood. They mostly occur at the beginning of the clause they modify, though they can come at the end as an afterthought (*You have a strong case,*

legally) and they can be internal in some kinds of clause (*It was in film rather than in literature that her true talent emerged*).

8.9.2 Modal Adjuncts

Adjuncts can express modality (§3.7), determining ways in which the content of a clause holds in a situation relative to other situations. These **modal** adjuncts may occur in initial position, between the subject and predicate, or at the end as an afterthought.

Modality expressions qualify the ways in which the main part of the content of a clause relates to the situations it talks about. The most basic and familiar modalities are epistemic necessity and possibility. In cases of necessity, where the main part of the clause expresses something said to hold in all relevantly imaginable situations: adverbs like *necessarily* and *certainly* express this. And possibility covers the case where it holds in at least some relevant situations: adverbs like *possibly*, *perhaps*, and *maybe* express this. Sometimes there are rough parallels between sentences with modal auxiliaries and sentences with modal adjuncts:

- | | | |
|------|---|--|
| [24] | WITH MODAL VERB | WITH MODAL ADJUNCT |
| | i a. <i>Darth <u>must</u> be Luke's father.</i> | b. <i>Darth is <u>obviously</u> Luke's father.</i> |
| | ii a. <i>It <u>could</u> be poisonous.</i> | b. <i><u>Maybe</u> it's poisonous.</i> |
| | iii a. <i>He <u>should</u> be there by now.</i> | b. <i>He's <u>probably</u> there by now.</i> |

There are many other items conveying modality of various strengths:

Usage Controversy Note

The adverb *hopefully* has two uses. It can serve either as a manner adjunct meaning “in a hopeful way” (commonly used with verbs of saying, as in ‘*Maybe it will all work out,*’ *she said hopefully*) or as a modal adjunct meaning “it is to be hoped”, as in *Hopefully this will never happen*. There are other adverbs with the same two uses: *clearly* is a manner adjunct meaning “lucidly and intelligibly” in *You should speak clearly*, but a modal adjunct meaning “obviously” in *Clearly, you should speak about it*.

The modal adjunct use of *hopefully* is at least a century old, but in the 1960s various newspaper columnists and usage advisers began to denounce it. The controversy was short-lived: by the 1980s even quite conservative usage experts (William Safire, for example) conceded that the modal adjunct use was acceptable. Prince Charles used it in a speech. The style authorities at the Associated Press news agency cautiously waited another three decades, but finally approved it in 2012.

Some people may still disapprove, but both uses are grammatical. And today the modal adjunct use is far more frequent: in most writing, most occurrences of *hopefully* are modal adjuncts, and in conversation the manner use is quite rare.

- | | | | |
|------|-----|---|-------------------------------------|
| [25] | i | <i>It's <u>certainly</u> unfair.</i> | [unfairness is absolutely certain] |
| | ii | <i>It is <u>presumably</u> unfair.</i> | [unfairness can be presumed] |
| | iii | <i>It is <u>probably</u> unfair.</i> | [chance of unfairness is above 50%] |
| | iv | <i>It is <u>conceivably</u> unfair.</i> | [chance of unfairness is not zero] |

8.9.3 Evaluative Adjuncts

Some adjuncts – mostly AdvP supplements – convey a subjective evaluation of the situation described by the content of the clause:

- [26]
- i *Luckily for you, I've got another one.*
 - ii *Ironically, his favourite course was the one that he failed.*
 - iii *We don't have to worry about that now, happily.*
 - iv *Fortunately enough, companies were quick to notice this.*
 - v *Sadly, the reality has been quite the opposite.*
 - vi *Ominously, interest rates were on the rise.*

These are understood as outside the clause even when in linear terms they are in the middle of it; for example, *He's not, luckily, a vindictive man* means “The following is luckily true: he's not vindictive”; it can't mean “It isn't lucky that he's vindictive.”

Evaluative adjuncts don't occur in interrogatives or imperatives: you can't add *luckily* to *Is he vindictive?* or to *Don't be vindictive*. When they occur in reports of what people said, the evaluation will generally be attributed to the subject of the relevant clause; that is, if I say *Susan told me that luckily she won't have to be at the meeting*, the evaluation of the situation as lucky tends to be understood to be Susan's, not mine.

8.9.4 Speech-Act Adjuncts

An adjunct can offer a side comment on the character of the speech act made by the utterance of the sentence in which it appears. Again, these tend to be supplements, often AdvPs:

- [27]
- i *Honestly, I can't really remember.*
 - ii *Pessimistically speaking, next quarter won't look much better.*

The meaning that *honestly* contributes in [i] does not apply to the verb *remember*: remembering is not really the sort of thing that can be honest or dishonest. It doesn't add a domain restriction or a modality or an evaluation to the content of the *remember* clause, either. Instead it comments on the character of what the speaker is doing. An infinitival clause could be used in the same way as the adverb in [i]: *To be honest with you, I can't really remember*. And the initial adjunct in [ii] announces that a pessimistic view is coming up. This is an additional kind of adjunct: a speech-act adjunct.

Adverbs that can function as manner adjuncts modifying VPs headed by verbs of saying have alternate uses as speech-act adjuncts:

- | | | |
|------|---|--|
| [28] | MANNER ADJUNCT | SPEECH-ACT ADJUNCT |
| i | <i>He spoke <u>frankly</u> about his addiction.</i> | <i><u>Frankly</u>, he said very little about it.</i> |
| ii | <i>I'll speak <u>briefly</u> about adjuncts.</i> | <i><u>Briefly</u>, my talk is about adjuncts.</i> |
| iii | <i>I hope we can talk <u>confidentially</u>.</i> | <i><u>Confidentially</u>, I'm also a candidate.</i> |

In a question, a speech-act adjunct often relates to the answer: *Frankly, what do you think are our chances?* suggests the speaker wants the addressee to be frank in answering. In some rarer cases the adjunct may relate to the question itself: *Frankly, who cares?* suggests the speaker is being frank by posing that rhetorical question.

Some adjuncts of other types can also be interpreted as being partially oriented toward the speech act:

- [29] i *I'm seeing someone new, if you must know.*
 ii *Since you ask, I'm seeing someone new.*

The constituent after the comma in [29i] is a **CONDITIONAL** adjunct, and [29ii] begins with a **REASON** adjunct. But both adjuncts are interpreted in a way that refers to the speech act. In [29i], I'm not saying my love life is dependent on whether you have to know about it; I'm merely noting that it's your need to know that is making me agree to say what I'm saying. And in [29ii], the *since* phrase isn't giving my reason for seeing someone new (though normally a non-temporal *since* PP does express a reason adjunct); it's a speech-act adjunct giving my reason for telling you what I'm telling you.

This shows rather clearly that the semantic classification of adjuncts is not always clean and sharp: some adjuncts exhibit a mix of different semantic types.

8.10 Connective Adjuncts

A final class of adjuncts is the class of **connective** adjuncts. These connect clauses together in terms of their semantic and information-packaging properties (see [Chapter 16](#)), making explicit certain links between them, such as whether they contrast with preceding sentences or can be inferred from them, and so on. They may be single words or multi-word phrases, and they may be AdvPs, PPs, or NPs. A few adverbs commonly used as connective adjuncts are listed in [30]. Many of them are much more likely to occur in writing than in speech, because in writing (at least, in carefully planned writing) more attention is given to selecting words that will clarify the flow of ideas from sentence to sentence.

- Many PPs are used in this sort of way: *by contrast; for example; for instance; in addition; in comparison; in conclusion; in other words; on the contrary; on the other hand*; etc.

In the same way that some speech-act adjuncts can have other semantic overtones (see the end of the [previous section](#)), some adverbs can be used as connective adjuncts while simultaneously expressing meanings characteristic of other classes of adjuncts: there are **concessive** connective adjuncts (*nevertheless, nonetheless, still, though, yet*), and **conditional** ones (*anyway, otherwise, then*), and adjuncts of **reason** (*accordingly, consequently, hence, therefore*) and **result** (*so, thus*).

Modifiers are almost always optional in the sense that you are allowed to omit them without their absence causing ungrammaticality, but they are clearly parts of the clauses that contain them. However, an adjunct can be so loosely associated with the sentence that it almost seems like a separate utterance tacked on to it, or even interrupting it. In speech, these loosely attached constituents are pronounced as entirely separate phonological phrases, with slight pauses at their boundaries, and in writing they are marked off by commas, dashes, or parentheses. We call them **supplements**, and they are also often known as ‘parentheticals’.

Supplements have been remarkably neglected by writers of grammars. It almost seems that grammarians have been assuming that the properties of supplements would be obvious and didn't need any description. But they have interesting and sometimes surprising properties. We begin by illustrating with five assorted examples, with the supplement underlined:

- Supplements often interrupt clauses, as in these cases, but they can also appear at the beginning, or on the end like an afterthought:

- [32] i *Commissioned by the council, the report did not reveal much.* [subjectless clause]
 ii *After six hours we reached home, completely exhausted.* [AdjP]

8.11.1 Anchors

Supplements are NOT dependents: they are not selected by heads the way complements are. Notice, for example, that in [31v] the supplement is an independent interrogative clause, which couldn't serve as a complement at all. But for every supplement there is some specific constituent that it is (loosely) associated with. We call that its **anchor**. The anchor is often a phrase adjacent to the supplement (in [31i] the anchor for the supplement is *Tracy Brown*), but it can be the clause that the supplement interrupts (in [31ii] the anchor is the clause *I have just spoken to them*).

Being an anchor is a semantic relationship, not a syntactic one like being a head or a supplement. For example, in [31i], *Tracy Brown* has the syntactic function of subject, but it also serves semantically as the anchor for the supplement *the chief executive*.

Although the anchor for a supplement does not grammatically select it, a supplement has to be semantically suitable for its anchor. In [33], for example, [i] is coherent and acceptable but [ii] is not.

- [33] i *This condition (that payment must be in cash) was a problem.* [suitable anchor]
 ii *#This condition (how were we going to pay) was a problem.* [unsuitable anchor]

The problem with [ii] isn't syntactic – it's not that the supplement has been positioned somewhere it shouldn't; it's just that *how were we going to pay* doesn't have the right sort of meaning to be semantically suitable: it expresses a question, not a condition.

8.11.2 Range of Categories Functioning as Supplements

Supplements can belong to a remarkable range of categories: NPs, clauses of all kinds, AdjPs, AdvPs, PPs, constituents beginning with a coordinator, and even interjections. And sometimes a constituent can be either a modifier or a supplement, with a resulting difference of meaning. We illustrate with two adverbs:

- [34] i *It'll probably be gone by morning.* [integrated modal modifier]
 ii *It'll be gone by morning, probably.* [modal supplement]
 iii *I'd prefer to talk about it frankly.* [integrated manner adjunct]
 iv *I'd prefer to talk about it, frankly.* [speech-act related supplement]

- In [i], *probably* is integrated into the structure of the predicate, and the statement is clearly just making a probability judgement about the future, but in [ii] the

statement is a simple prediction, and the supplement that adds *probably* seems to be an afterthought to render the claim less confident.

- In [iii], *frankly* is an integrated modifier carrying the word's manner-adjunct sense, "candidly and honestly", but when used as a supplement in [iv] the same adverb has its speech-act related sense, something like "I'm being frank with you in saying this".

Exercises on Chapter 8

1. Classify the underlined adjuncts in the following based on one of the types in [1].

Despite our ever-present nostalgia for the foods of childhood, tastes and recipes are always evolving. We have no definitive version of macaroni and cheese, or any dish for that matter. The word "macaroni," first coined in Italy, describes any short tubular pasta; there, the cheese of choice was often Parmesan. Although I have yet to uncover a primary source to prove the point, I would wager that macaroni, which first became fashionable in England in the eighteenth century, most likely reached Britain in the trunks of travellers. The dish soon grew so popular among anglophones that "macaroni" became slang for a dandy who favoured outlandish wigs, which is why Yankee Doodle "stuck a feather in his cap and called it macaroni."

The Italian recipe typically featured the noodle, rather than a cheesy sauce, in the starring role, but English cooks inverted this relationship, adding English cheeses, such as cheddar, and egg yolks, to create a creamier, more pudding-like dish. An early domestic iteration, published in Modern Practical Cookery in 1845, calls for puff pastry to line the baking dish. Its author, Mrs. Nourse, gives instructions to stew the noodles in a cream thickened with egg yolks, with a little "beaten mace" and "made mustard" to sharpen the flavours before grating Parmesan or Cheshire cheese over top.

["Kraft Dinner is Canada's True National Dish" by Sacha Chapman]

2. Underline the clause structure adjuncts in the following examples.

Peeper was 4 when the Mayo Clinic confirmed a diagnosis: she had a disorder known as fibrodysplasia ossificans progressiva (FOP).

The name meant nothing to Peeper's parents – unsurprising, given that it is one of the rarest diseases in the world. One in 2 million people have it.

Peeper's diagnosis meant that, over her lifetime, she would essentially develop a second skeleton. Within a few years, she would begin to grow new bones that would stretch across her body, some fusing to her original skeleton. Bone by bone, the disease would lock her into stillness. The Mayo doctors didn't tell Peeper's parents that. All they did say was that Peeper would not live long.

"Basically, my parents were told there was nothing that could be done," Peeper told me in October. "They should just take me home and enjoy their time with me, because I would probably not live to be a teenager."

["The Girl Who Turned to Bone" by Carl Zimmer]

3. [Supplementary exercise] Try to replace each underlined adjunct in [2] with one from a different category (e.g., replace a PP with an AdvP), without too significantly changing the meaning.

Example: *tastes and recipes are always evolving.*

tastes and recipes are evolving all the time.

4. Classify the underlined constituents as adjuncts or complements. Provide your evidence.

- i *But some constituents that can serve as adjuncts can also function as complements, while making a very similar semantic contribution.*
- ii *Conditional adjuncts and reason adjuncts can be speech-act adjuncts at the same time.*
- iii *A constituent functioning as modifier is an adjunct that is thoroughly integrated into clause structure.*
- iv *Semantically it modifies the meaning of some item in the containing clause.*
- v *A constituent functioning as a supplement is not fully integrated.*
- vi *This constituent is functioning as supplement and is not fully integrated.*
- vii *Manner adjuncts generally take the form of AdvPs or PPs.*
- viii *These very common adjuncts are modifiers, tightly integrated with the VP and associated very clearly with the meaning of the verb.*
- ix *Some adjuncts modify the whole act described by a clause, not the action or state identified by the verb.*
- x *What the adjuncts modify is not the action or state identified by the verb.*

5. Rephrase each of the following sentences, removing the modal auxiliary and adding a modal adjunct, keeping the meaning roughly equivalent.

- i *They will have arrived by now.*
- ii *You may not have noticed.*
- iii *This may be worth trying as part of your testing.*
- iv *This might well be her last shot.*
- v *If you need more information, you might try Googling it.*
- vi *The door must be unlocked.*
- vii *We should be able to get in.*

6. Identify all the locations where the underlined adjunct may appear without significant change to the meaning. In some cases, no other position is possible.

Example: *^ The situation ^ could ^ change, clearly.*

- i *He played his hand foolishly.*
- ii *Foolishly, I opened the door.*

- iii *It stood quite near the window.*
- iv *Get it sorted out right now.*
- v *They've totally solved the problem.*
- vi *The saucepans are there to be used.*
- vii *It's outside, although it isn't in the sun.*
- viii *It'll do better if it gets some sun.*
- ix *Artistically, it was a real success.*
- x *In all probability, you don't want to see this.*

7. Add a conditional adjunct to each clause including a present-tense verb with future time reference. Rewrite the resulting sentence, first using a present-tense verb with non-future time reference, second using a past-tense verb with past time reference, and finally using a modal preterite. Mark the ungrammatical results with an asterisk.

Example: *I can go if you drive.*

I can go if it's your place.

I can go if I passed the test.

I can go if you would like me to.

- i *She may also enjoy support in a number of other towns or cities.*
- ii *I would try reinstalling the OS.*
- iii *Farmers are getting only 20 per cent of the water they request.*
- iv *I will stop.*
- v *I hadn't seen her in years.*
- vi *She no longer competes in marathons.*
- vii *He should be updating the city on the special weather plans.*
- viii *I can hear Ivan coughing in the next room.*
- ix *I enjoyed being with good lawyers.*
- x *I could recall similar times in my own life.*

8. Identify the anchor for the underlined supplement.

- i *Today, there are more than 24,000.*
- ii *Jason Isbell took home three awards, including Album of the Year.*
- iii *It's fascinating to view, with the benefit of hindsight, the later ramifications.*
- iv *I told her that, like the rest of us, he looked a lot better before.*
- v *Two days ago, this picture was all over the Internet.*
- vi *It was a dull room, very quiet and plain.*
- vii *Completely attentive, I'd see the bird in the air.*
- viii *This example is not about supplements, though.*
- ix *It's not the show, which is great, but what you do afterwards.*
- x *I want to thank my old professor, Michael.*

9. Replace the underlined supplements in [8] with supplements of a different category.
10. Rewrite each sentence, removing the coordinator and adding a connective adjunct with similar meaning. Add punctuation if it is required.
 - i They're spending the night at a friend's or sleeping off a big weekend.
 - ii I don't get terrible stage fright, but I thought I'd try it and see how it worked.
 - iii *Should I go for it, or would you like to?*
 - iv *I get a lot of push back, but that's OK.*
 - v *The leopard seals eat the penguins and the whales eat the seals.*
 - vi *She'd already endured wrist injuries, slumps, feuds, putting woes, and the weight of great expectations.*
 - vii *The photon ends up going one way and the nucleus the other.*
 - viii *They're smart enough to watch and enjoy the movie, but not believe EVERYTHING they see.*
 - ix *It's early afternoon, and the party is just getting started.*
 - x *Canada has had legal gay marriage for years and the sky has not fallen.*
11. [Supplementary exercise] Rewrite the paragraph, adding the connective adjuncts from below to improve cohesion.

Sischo is 35, lean, and relentlessly chipper. He is stifling laughter that is four parts gallows humor and one part panic. But the panicked portion has been growing. Already declining snail populations have gone into a terminal nosedive. Sischo's team observed a species that hadn't been seen. It was a hopeful event, but the team had nowhere to put these survivors. They were all gone. "We clipped every freaking leaf on that tree, and nothing," Sischo said. "That will haunt me for the rest of my life." [“The Last of Its Kind” by Ed Yong]

despite his work

for example

for some reason

in 2014

probably

recently

since the 1980s

seven individuals, in a single tree

usually

when he talks about the snails

when the conservationists finally returned to rescue the group two years later

with the trailer still under construction

12. What kinds of adjuncts can the infinitival *to be honest* express?

13. [Supplementary exercise] Pay attention to what people say around you, what you see on the Internet, what you hear on the radio, etc. Collect one example of each type of adjunct from the list in [1].
14. [Supplementary exercise] Using the following data, say whether you think the idiomatic pair of phrases *their heads* and *off* act more like complements or more like adjuncts.

My friends were chatting.
 **My friends were chatting their team.*
My friends were chatting their heads off.
My friends were cheering their team.
My friends were cheering their heads off.
 **My friends were cheering / chatting their heads.*
 **My friends were cheering / chatting off.*
 **My friends were cheering their team off.*
 **My friends were cheering their team their heads off.*

15. In each case below, is the PP a dependent in a gerund-participial VP or in the preterite VP? Is the gerund-participial VP more like a complement or an adjunct or a complement? Present your evidence.
- i *The ball went screaming over the wall.*
 - ii *She lay chortling on the bed.*
16. In each case, what adjuncts, if any, are included in the meaning of *do so*? Of those included, which need to be reinterpreted?
- i *A good idea is to test it out yourself and ask other people to do so too.*
 - ii *I personally love this series so hopefully you will do so too!*
 - iii *I walk the dog in the morning, while she does so in the evening.*
 - iv *I will take action to prevent sexual harassment, and support others to do so too.*
 - v *If we can find the details in a few days, then others could do so too.*
 - vi *If they push rates up next year in the US then we could do so in the UK.*
 - vii *Seventy-nine per cent of retirees start their benefits before age sixty-five. Whether you should do so depends on how much income you need.*
 - viii *She did not begin until he had won assurances that the EC would do so too.*
 - ix *Since you insisted on putting it in economic terms the other day, I'll do so too.*
 - x *The opposition bowed out when the LDC won. Now the LDC need to do so.*

17. [Supplementary exercise] We structured this chapter mostly along semantic lines. We could have organized it, instead, around syntactic categories: NP adjuncts, PP adjuncts, etc. Explain the advantages and disadvantages of each option.
18. [Supplementary exercise] Imagine that, for a few weeks, you've been noticing adjuncts of concession regularly coming either as the initial or final element, even when there are a number of adjuncts. What kind of data would help you to find out if this is a rule or a coincidence?

9

Negation

9.1 Negative and Positive Clauses

Negation is marked by individual words (such as *not*, *no*, *never*) in a variety of functions (including adjunct, determiner, and head of VP) or by affixes within a word (the suffix *-n't* or prefixes like *un-* or *non-*). Very often, however, there is an effect on the whole clause. The grammatical system in which positive and negative contrast is called **polarity**. In pairs like those in [1], for example, we have a contrast between a clause with **positive polarity** and a corresponding one with **negative polarity**.

- [1] POSITIVE POLARITY CLAUSE NEGATIVE POLARITY CLAUSE
 a. *He has signed the agreement.* b. *He hasn't signed the agreement.*

A simple pair of positive and negative declarative clauses like these have the semantic property that they cannot both be true, but they also cannot both be false. One of them must be true: either he has signed the agreement or he hasn't.

Syntactically, positive is the default polarity: clauses are positive unless they are marked by the presence of specific extra material, like the negative suffix *-n't* on the auxiliary in [1b]. And positive and negative clauses differ in the way they combine with other expressions in the structure of larger units. The following three subsections present tests for negative polarity.

9.1.1 The *Not Even* Test for Negative Polarity

After a negative clause, we can add an adjunct introduced by *not even*, and it makes sense. This is not possible with positive clauses: adding *not even* here leads to ungrammaticality. Compare:

- [2] i. NEGATIVE CLAUSE *I haven't read your book, not even the introduction.*
 ii. POSITIVE CLAUSE **I have read your book, not even the introduction.*

The addition in [i] is interpreted as “I haven't even read the introduction”. The *not* isn't obligatory (cf. *I haven't read your book, even the introduction*) but the crucial point is that it can occur in the negative clause [i] but is impossible in the positive [ii].

9.1.2 The Tell-Tale Adjuncts *So* and *Neither*

When we add a related clause of the same polarity, the positive pair may be linked by *so*, the negative pair by *neither* or *nor*:

- [3] i POSITIVE CLAUSE *I have read her book, and so have my students.*
 ii NEGATIVE CLAUSE *I haven't read her book, and neither have my students.*

Switching the adjuncts leads to ungrammaticality (**I have read her book and neither have my students*; **I haven't read her book and so have my students*). The two clauses are very often coordinated, as in [3], but they do not have to be. For example, one speaker might say *I have read her book*, and another might then simply add *So have I*.

9.1.3 Confirmation Tags: *Aren't They?*

One way to invite your addressee to supply confirmation of what you're saying is to add an adjunct consisting of a truncated interrogative clause known as a *tag*. Generally, it consists of just an auxiliary verb plus a personal pronoun subject and has the *OPPOSITE* of the polarity (positive or negative status) of the clause you attach it to:

- [4] i POSITIVE CLAUSE + NEGATIVE TAG *They have read my book, haven't they?*
 ii NEGATIVE CLAUSE + POSITIVE TAG *They haven't read my book, have they?*

In [i] the negative tag (*haven't they?*) attaches to a positive clause, while in [ii] the positive tag (*have they?*) attaches to the negative clause.

These reversed polarity tags are different from the ones with constant polarity. The constant polarity tags don't ask for confirmation, but suggest an attitude such as surprise, disbelief, or disapproval: imagine an author saying *Ha! So they claim to have read my book, do they?*

For most speakers, constant polarity tags CANNOT BE USED WITH NEGATIVE CLAUSES: those speakers find **So they haven't read my book, haven't they?* and similar sentences ungrammatical. So for them, we have another test for positive clauses: if a negative tag is acceptable on a clause, the clause is positive. (For speakers who accept the asterisked sentence, there is no such test.)

9.2 Subclausal Negation

We have seen that the effect of a negative element is very often to make the clause containing it negative. Negative elements don't always have this effect, however. In the cases where they don't, the negation is *subclausal*.

9.2.1 Affixal Negation

The most obvious case where negative elements don't make a clause negative is where the negative element is an affix other than the *·n't* auxiliary verb inflection. Examples include the underlined prefixes in *dislike*, *inattentive*, *non-negotiable*, or *unwilling*, or suffixes such as *·less* in *homeless*. We can use the constructions exemplified in [2–4] to show that these affixes don't make the whole clause negative; for example, we can compare *He was unkind*, which contains the prefix *un·*, with *He wasn't kind*, which contains a negative verb form. The latter clause is of course negative, but the former is positive, as shown in [5]:

[5]	SUBCLAUSAL NEGATION	CLAUSAL NEGATION
i	a. * <i>He was unkind, <u>not even</u> to me.</i>	b. <i>He wasn't kind, <u>not even</u> to me.</i>
ii	a. <i>He was unkind, and <u>so</u> was Sue.</i>	b. <i>He wasn't kind, and <u>neither</u> was Sue.</i>
iii	a. <i>He was unkind, <u>wasn't he</u>?</i>	b. <i>He wasn't kind, <u>was he</u>?</i>

- *He was unkind* behaves like a positive clause: [ia] shows it doesn't accept *not even*, [iia] shows it allows *so* as a connective adjunct, and [iiia] shows that it selects a negative confirmation tag.
- *He wasn't kind* behaves in the opposite way: [ib] shows it accepts *not even*, [iib] shows it takes *neither* (or *nor*) as a connective adjunct, and [iiib] shows it selects a positive confirmation tag.

We call the negation in *He was unkind* subclausal because it works below the level of the clause.

There's also a semantic difference between *He was unkind* and *He wasn't kind*. If *He wasn't kind* is false, then *He was kind* must be true; but if *He was unkind* is false, it doesn't follow that *He was kind* is true: he could behave in a neutral way, neither kind nor unkind.

9.2.2 Other Cases of Subclausal Negation

Some further contrasts between subclausal and clausal negation are illustrated in [6]:

[6]	SUBCLAUSAL NEGATION	CLAUSAL NEGATION
i	a. <i>She works for <u>nothing</u>.</i>	b. <i>She's interested in <u>nothing</u>.</i>
ii	a. <i>It was <u>no</u> mean achievement.</i>	b. <i>It was <u>no</u> great deal.</i>
iii	a. <i>This is a <u>not</u> uncommon mistake.</i>	b. <i>This is <u>not</u> an uncommon mistake.</i>
iv	a. <i><u>Not</u> surprisingly, he complained.</i>	b. <i>Surprisingly, he did <u>not</u> complain.</i>

Again the tests differentiate clearly between the [a] and [b] examples: the right confirmation tag for [ia] would be *doesn't she?*; the one for [ib] would be *is she?*; and so on.

- *Nothing* and *no* generally mark clausal negation, as in [ib] and [iib]. But [ia] and [iia] show that there are some constructions where they occur in subclausal negation.
- The contrast in [iii] is due to the fact that the *not* in [a] is in AdjP structure (it's tucked inside the attributive modifier *not uncommon* in NP structure), whereas in [b] the *not* is in clause structure, modifying the VP headed by *is*.
- Similarly, in [iva], *not* is a modifier in AdvP structure, and the clause is positive, while in [iivb] it applies to *complain* (the meaning is “He didn’t complain, which was surprising”), and the clause is negative.

9.3 Clausal Negation

Within clausal negation we need to make a further distinction between **verb** and **non-verb** negation:

- | | | |
|-----|--|--|
| [7] | VERB NEGATION | NON-VERB NEGATION |
| i | a. <i>She <u>didn't</u> tell me anything.</i> | b. <i>She told me <u>nothing</u>.</i> |
| ii | a. <i>She <u>does not</u> live here anymore.</i> | b. <i>She <u>no longer</u> lives here.</i> |

Verb negation is marked either by **negative inflection** of the verb, as in *didn't* in [ia], or by **modification** of the VP by the separate adverb *not*, as in *does not* [iia].

9.3.1 Verb Negation

The grammatical significance of the distinction between negation marked on the verb and negation on non-verb constituents is that in tensed clauses verb negation requires the insertion of the **dummy auxiliary** *do* under certain conditions, whereas non-verb negation never does. This difference is evident in [7] above, where *do* is required in the [a] examples but not the [b] ones.

Conditions for Insertion of Dummy *Do* with Verb Negation

In Clauses with a Primary Verb Form Negative clauses showing tense (preterite or present) require the presence of an auxiliary verb. If there is no auxiliary in the corresponding positive clause, the negative has an additional *do* as described in §3.2.1:

- | | | |
|-----|--|---|
| [8] | POSITIVE | NEGATIVE |
| i | a. <i>She <u>is</u> lenient with them.</i> | b. <i>She <u>isn't</u> lenient with them.</i> |
| ii | a. <i>She rejected his offer.</i> | b. <i>She <u>didn't</u> reject his offer.</i> |

- In [ia] *be* is an auxiliary verb, so we do NOT insert *do* when negating the clause.
- In [iia] *reject* is a lexical verb, so the negative in [iib] has an additional *do* which carries the *-n't* suffix.

In Imperative Clauses Imperative clauses with verb negation ALWAYS require *do*:

- [9] i a. *Be lenient with them.* b. *Don't* *be lenient with them.*
 ii a. *Reject his offer.* b. *Don't* *reject his offer.*

Notice the difference between [9ib] and [8ib]: *be* is an auxiliary verb, so *do* is not added in the declarative [8ib], but it is nevertheless required in the imperative [9ib]. Other auxiliaries are incompatible with the imperative clause type (see §10.4.1).

Inflectional Verb Form versus *Not*

We said that verb negation is marked either by negative inflection on the verb itself or by using the separate word *not* to modify the VP. Inflectional negation is admissible only in clauses with a primary verb form, as in [8b], and in imperative clauses as in [9b]. Elsewhere, neither *do* nor negative inflection is permitted, which means you have to use the separate word *not*, as in the subjunctive clauses in [10]:

- | | | |
|------|---|--|
| [10] | MARKING BY INFLECTION | MARKING BY <i>not</i> |
| | i a. * <i>It is vital [that we <u>ben't</u> disturbed].</i> | b. <i>It is vital [that we <u>not be</u> disturbed].</i> |
| | ii a. * <i>It is vital [that he <u>don't</u> delay].</i> | b. <i>It is vital [that he <u>not delay</u>].</i> |

Where marking with *not* is the only option, the *not* comes BEFORE the verb rather than after it. This is true for all non-tensed verbs: for clauses without tense (see Chapter 14), *not* is added before the verb. So the negated version of *doing your homework* is *not doing your homework*.

In constructions that permit both kinds of verb negation, the difference between them is primarily one of style. Marking by *not* is characteristic of more formal style than inflectional negation. In fact for everyday conversation, inflectional negation is essentially obligatory unless the word *not* is heavily emphasized: *He does not want to come* or *It is not necessary* sounds quite unnatural compared to *He doesn't want to come* or *It isn't necessary*.

9.3.2 Non-Verb Clausal Negation

Non-verb clausal negation is marked either by using the word *not* to modify a constituent other than a VP, or else by using various negative words that are not used for verb negation: *nothing*, *never*, *few*, etc.

Not As a Marker of Non-Verb Negation

Not can modify a considerable range of non-verb elements, but by no means all. In the following examples, single underlining highlights *not* and double underlining marks the head of the element that it modifies – correctly in the [a] examples, but ungrammatically in the [b] examples:

- | | | |
|------|--|--|
| [11] | ADMISSIBLE | INADMISSIBLE |
| | i a. <u>Not everybody</u> agrees with you. | b. * <u>Not somebody</u> agrees with you. |
| | ii a. <u>Not all</u> of her friends supported her. | b. * <u>Not each</u> of her friends supported her. |
| | iii a. <u>Not even</u> Tom liked it. | b. * <u>Not Tom</u> liked it. |

Other Markers of Non-Verb Negation

We'll limit attention here to items that can mark clausal negation. This excludes the affixes *un-*, *non-*, *in-*, etc., which – as illustrated in [5] above – mark subclausal negation. There are two groups to consider: **absolute negators** and **approximate negators**.

Absolute Negators

These are listed in [12], with some examples of clausal negation given in [13]:

- | | | |
|------|-------|---|
| [12] | i | <i>no, none, nobody, no one, nothing, nowhere</i> |
| | ii | <i>neither, nor, never</i> |
| [13] | i a. | <u>Nobody</u> objected to her plan. |
| | b. | <u>Neither Kim nor Pat</u> has arrived. |
| | ii a. | We found <u>no</u> mistakes. |
| | b. | He <u>never</u> apologizes. |

Where the negator DOESN'T PRECEDE OR INCLUDE the subject in clausal negation, as in [13ii], there's usually an equivalent clause with verb negation:

- | | | |
|------|--|---|
| [14] | NON-VERB NEGATION | EQUIVALENT VERB NEGATION |
| | i a. We found <u>no</u> mistakes. (= [13iia]) | b. We <u>didn't</u> find <u>any</u> mistakes. |
| | ii a. There is <u>no one</u> here. | b. There <u>isn't</u> <u>anyone</u> here. |
| | iii a. He <u>never</u> apologizes. (= [13iib]) | b. He <u>doesn't</u> <u>ever</u> apologize. |

The versions with verb negation have forms that begin with *any* instead of the *no*-prefix.

Approximate Negators

These are listed in [15], and in [16], we again give examples involving clausal negation:

- | | | |
|------|--|---|
| [15] | <i>few, little; rarely, seldom; barely, hardly, scarcely</i> | |
| [16] | i a. <u>Few</u> of them realized it was a hoax. | b. He <u>rarely</u> goes to church now. |
| | ii a. She <u>hardly</u> spoke a word all evening. | b. There's <u>scarcely</u> any food left. |

Few of them is similar in meaning to *none of them*: *none* indicates absolutely zero, while *few* puts the number within a small part of the scale down at the end close to zero. This is why we say it is an **approximate negator**: *few of them* means roughly none of them for most practical purposes. In a similar way, *rarely* roughly approaches *never*, and *hardly spoke a word* roughly amounts to *didn't speak a word*, and *scarcely any food* expresses an approximation to *no food*.

Although only approximations to their near-paraphrases, these items largely follow the pattern of the absolute negators with respect to the grammatical tests for clausal negation. In particular, the confirmation tags for the examples in [16] are those that attach to absolute negative clauses. For [ia] we have *did they?*, for [ib] *does he?*, for [iia] *did she?*, and for [iib] *is there?* Note here the contrast between *few*, which is negative, and *a few*, which is positive, as shown by the tag in *A few of them realized it was a hoax, didn't they?*

9.4 Non-Affirmative Items

A number of words or larger expressions have the property of being **polarity-sensitive**, in the sense that they occur readily in clauses of one polarity but not of the other. Compare, for example:

- | | | |
|------|--|--|
| [17] | POSITIVE | NEGATIVE |
| | i a. <i>I have some ideas to share.</i> | b. <i>*I don't have some ideas to share.</i> |
| | ii a. <i>*I have any ideas to share.</i> | b. <i>I don't have any ideas to share.</i> |

- *Some* isn't wholly excluded from negative clauses, but it's subject to restrictions that do not apply to the positive: we say, therefore, that it has **positive orientation**.
- Conversely *any* (in the sense it has here) has **negative orientation**: it occurs freely in negatives but is excluded from positives like [iia].

The majority of polarity-sensitive items have negative orientation, and our main focus here will be on these.

What excludes *any* from [17iia] is not just that the clause is positive: it is also **declarative**. If we look instead at an **interrogative** clause, we find that it is freely admitted:

- [18] a. *Do you have any ideas to share?* b. *Who has any ideas to share?*

In general, the restriction on items like *any* is that they do not occur in **positive declarative** clauses. We'll refer to them as **non-affirmative** items (affirming contrasts with questioning, suggesting declarativeness, and the adjective *affirmative* is a synonym of *positive*).

A sample of non-affirmative items is given in [19]. Some of them are non-affirmative only in certain senses or uses (though it's often the most frequently occurring of their uses), and we mark those with a subscript 'N'; variable lexemes are shown in bold italics as usual.

- [19] i *any_N, anybody_N, any longer / more, anyone_N, anything_N, anywhere_N*
 ii *at all, either_N, ever_N, long_N, much, whatever_N, yet_N*
 iii *dare_N, need_N, bother (+ to-infinitival), budge, can bear_N, can stand_N, give a damn / fig/shit, have a clue_N, lift a finger_N, move a muscle_N, see a thing_N*

The following examples illustrate the differences between polarity-sensitive and non-polarity-sensitive uses of the five items *anybody*, *either*, *ever*, *long*, and the *can stand* idiom:

- | | | |
|------|---|---|
| [20] | NON-AFFIRMATIVE | NOT POLARITY-SENSITIVE |
| | i a. <i>Did you see <u>anybody</u>?</i> | b. <i><u>Anybody</u> can make promises.</i> |
| | ii a. <i>I didn't see <u>either</u> of them.</i> | b. <i><u>Either</u> version would do.</i> |
| | iii a. <i>Will it <u>ever</u> end?</i> | b. <i>It will last for <u>ever</u>.</i> |
| | iv a. <i>I won't stay <u>long</u>.</i> | b. <i>It has been a <u>long</u> day.</i> |
| | v a. <i>No one <u>could stand</u> the pressure.</i> | b. <i>Everyone <u>can stand</u> for a minute.</i> |

Dare and *need* are non-affirmative in their use as modal auxiliaries (*You needn't tell him*), but not when they're ordinary lexical verbs (*You need to tell him*), as briefly mentioned in §3.2.3.

9.4.1 Other Constructions that Accept Non-Affirmatives

It is not only negatives and interrogatives that allow non-affirmative items to appear. They are also found in a number of other constructions, as illustrated in [21].

- [21] i *She was too taken aback to say anything.*
 ii *She ran faster than she had ever run before.*
 iii *We slipped away without anyone noticing.*

The constructions concerned all have semantic affinities with negation.

- Because of the *too* in [i], we understand that she did NOT say anything.
- Because of the comparative, [ii] indicates that she had NEVER run that fast before.
- Because of the meaning of *without*, it follows from [iii] that NO ONE noticed.

9.5 Scope of Negation

The **scope** of negation is the part of the sentence that the negative applies to semantically. Contrasts like the one in [22] illustrate the concept:

- [22] NEGATION HAS WIDER SCOPE *many* HAS WIDER SCOPE
 a. *Not many people believed him.* b. *Many people didn't believe him.*

The difference in meaning is sharp: [a] entails that the number of people who believed him is relatively small, but [b] does not (we might be talking, for example, about a major political figure in a country with a huge population, where millions of people didn't believe him and millions of others did).

- In [a] the negation applies to *many*: the number of people who believed him was not large. We say then that the negation has wider scope, or that *many* falls within the scope of the negation, or that the negation HAS SCOPE OVER *many*.

- In [b], however, the negation does not apply to *many*: it does not have scope over it. On the contrary, the quantification expressed by *many* has the wider scope: it has scope over the negation, since it gives the size of the set of people who had the property that they didn't believe him.

This kind of contrast is also found in the following pairs, where again the item with double underlining has scope over the one with single underlining:

- [23] i a. *I didn't omit my name deliberately.* b. *I deliberately didn't omit my name.*
 ii a. *You needn't tell anyone about it.* b. *You mustn't tell anyone about it.*
- In [ia] the negative has scope over the adjunct *deliberately*: omitting my name was not something I made a point of doing. In [ib], by contrast, *deliberately* has scope over the negation: I made a point of not omitting my name.
 - In [iia] the negation has scope over the modal auxiliary *need*, expressing deontic necessity: "It's NOT NECESSARY for you to tell anyone about it". In [iib], however, modal *must*, likewise expressing deontic necessity, has scope over the negation: "It is NECESSARY that you NOT tell anyone about it".

Note that in cases where some element has scope over the negation, it is normally possible to find a paraphrase in which the negative marker is located in a subordinate clause.

- For [22b], we have: *There were many people [who didn't believe him].*
- For [23ib]: *I deliberately chose [not to omit my name].*
- For [23iib], *You are required [not to tell anyone about it].*

There's a correlation between semantic scope and grammatical order. Very often, a negative element has scope over what follows but is within the scope of elements that precede. For example, in [22] and [23i] the negative marker in [a] precedes the element over which it has scope and in [b] follows the element which has scope over it. But the correlation is clearly only partial. In [23ii], for example, there's no difference in grammatical structure between [a] and [b]: the scope difference is attributable to specific properties of the modal auxiliaries *must* and *need*.

Exercises on Chapter 9

1. Are the following clauses grammatically positive or negative? Give evidence for your answers.
 - i *You're so negative I want to strangle you.*
 - ii *I disagree with all of you.*
 - iii *They're always complaining about things of no importance at all.*
 - iv *I can do nothing to help you.*

- v *Never before had they offered such good terms.*
 - vi *That's absolute nonsense, you brainless ninny.*
 - vii *We finished the job in no time.*
 - viii *Everybody hates lying, mealy-mouthed, pontificating little weasels like you.*
 - ix *We can't just not answer their letter.*
 - x *There's hardly any chance of them changing their mind.*
2. The following examples have **non-verbal** clausal negation; construct equivalent examples with **verbal negation**.
- i *He had told neither the boss nor her secretary.*
 - ii *They were impressed by none of the candidates.*
 - iii *We have nowhere to hide.*
 - iv *I saw no one on the road.*
 - v *We're taking neither of them with us.*
3. Discuss the difference in meaning between the following:
- i *He had read a few books on the subject.*
 - ii *He had read few books on the subject.*
4. For each of the following words or expressions, construct one example where it behaves as a **non-affirmative** item and one where it is not polarity-sensitive (note that *much* and *need* have differing inflectional forms):
- i *anything*
 - ii *much*
 - iii *need* (verb)
 - iv *whatever*
 - v *yet*
5. Compose an original example sentence, not in the book, for each of the following.
- i absolute negator
 - ii approximate negator
 - iii affixal negative
 - iv verbal negative
 - v non-verbal negative
 - vi inflectional verb form negative
 - vii negative clause with dummy *do*
 - viii reverse polarity tag
 - ix constant polarity tag
 - x a polarity-sensitive item with a positive orientation
6. [Supplementary exercise] If *some* is a polarity-sensitive item that demands an affirmative context, how could examples like this be accounted for?
You wouldn't believe some of the stuff I've gotten out of fabric with this spray.

7. Which lexical category do each of the following words belong to? If a word belongs to more than one category, construct an example for each category.

- i *not*
- ii *no*
- iii *none*
- iv *neither*
- v *nothing*
- vi *nowhere*
- vii *never*
- viii *nor*
- ix *unhappy*
- x *can't*

8. What syntactic function is performed by each of the underlined words?

- i No sober economist would have predicted the success of the Wikipedia model.
- ii Homo Sapiens are no better than bacteria.
- iii No, I can't.
- iv You never know what you're going to find when you go to Monaco.
- v They only rarely got the interpreters they were legally entitled to.
- vi My stomach can't handle it anymore, and neither can my conscience.
- vii Neither team led by more than one until a Holly Mertens kill and two attack errors.
- viii There's nothing wrong with that.
- ix None of us can remember what the outrage of two weeks ago was.
- x I haven't been able to stop thinking about that kiss.

9. Construct an original example sentence with negation of the following constituents.

- i NP
- ii AdjP
- iii Nom
- iv PP
- v AdvP
- vi negative AdjP
- vii negative NP

10. [Supplementary exercise] The following are examples of “misnegation”, in which the speaker meant one thing, but got confused by wrestling with more than one negation. Explain what was probably intended in each case and what the sentences actually mean if you parse the negatives carefully.

- i *The Judge Institute is a building that no-one in Cambridge can fail to ignore.*
 - ii *It's impossible to underestimate Lucille Ball's importance to the new communications medium.*
 - iii *None of this means that some of the most talented journalists in the world don't still labour for this newspaper.*
 - iv *I'm surprised at the lack of unpreparedness.*
 - v *I don't want to discourage people from not voting today.*
 - vi *That is not to say that I don't think that corpus work can't be useful, even in theoretical syntax.*
 - vii *This is a tournament in which McIlroy has not failed to finish outside the top five since 2013.*
 - viii *South Korea's obsession with speedskating isn't hard to miss.*
 - ix *A new study suggests that mosquitoes might learn not to avoid people who swat at them.*
 - x *You can't help but not be worried.*
11. [Supplementary exercise] We analyse both *not* and *never* as adverbs. How are they similar, and how do they differ?
12. [Supplementary exercise] How does *never* differ from a more typical adverb such as *quickly*?

10

Clause Type

10.1 Speech Acts and Types of Clause

So far, we've seen many cases where a syntactic difference signals a semantic difference. In this chapter, we look at a number of syntactic differences that are typically used for different pragmatic purposes. Semantics is the part of linguistics dealing with the literal meaning of sentences, while pragmatics is the study of how the things speakers say are actually interpreted in real-life contexts.

Philosophers use the term **speech acts** for things you can do with sentences of your language – things like making **statements**, asking **questions**, issuing **commands**, or uttering **exclamations**. The term has been widely adopted by linguists. We've already noted that the terms 'speaker' and 'utterance' have extended uses covering writing and signing as well as speech (see §1.1 and §5.8.1), and the same applies to 'speech act': the acts of making statements, asking questions, issuing commands and uttering exclamations can of course be performed by writing or signing as well as by speaking.

Which kind of speech act you can perform by uttering a given sentence depends to a large extent, though not rigidly, on its syntactic form. The syntax of English distinguishes a set of **clause types** that are characteristically (not invariably) used to perform different kinds of speech acts. The major types are the five illustrated in [1]:

- | | | | |
|-----|-----|----------------------|------------------------------|
| [1] | i | DECLARATIVE | <i>You are very tactful.</i> |
| | ii | CLOSED INTERROGATIVE | <i>Are you very tactful?</i> |
| | iii | OPEN INTERROGATIVE | <i>How tactful are you?</i> |
| | iv | EXCLAMATIVE | <i>How tactful you are!</i> |
| | v | IMPERATIVE | <i>Be very tactful.</i> |

Although the correspondence between these clause types and the speech acts they can be used to perform is not one-to-one, speech acts do have a characteristic typical correlation with clause types. We show the default correlation in [2]:

[2]	CLAUSE TYPE	CHARACTERISTIC SPEECH ACT
i	declarative	making a statement
ii	closed interrogative	asking a closed question
iii	open interrogative	asking an open question
iv	exclamative	making an exclamatory statement
v	imperative	issuing a directive

- **Directive** is to be understood as a technical term in philosophy and linguistics with a much broader sense than it has in everyday English: it covers commands, instructions, requests, entreaties, and similar acts prototypically aimed at getting the addressee to do something.
- A **closed question** (notice, this is a SEMANTIC term) is a question with a closed set of answers. For example, *Would you prefer to meet on Monday, Tuesday, or Friday?* expresses a closed question, one that has three possible answers, given in the form of the interrogative clause. They are: *Monday* (or *I'd prefer to meet on Monday*); *Tuesday* (or *I'd prefer to meet on Tuesday*); and *Friday* (or *I'd prefer to meet on Friday*). Similarly, *Is Sue here?* expresses a closed question; this one has only two possible answers: *Yes* and *No* (or equivalents like *Yes, she's here* and *No, she isn't here*). This is the type sometimes referred to as 'polar'.
- *Where is Sue?*, by contrast, expresses an **open question**. The set of answers is open-ended – there is no limit in principle to the number of different places where Sue might be.

The correlations in [2] could perhaps provide for useful cross-linguistic definitions of the clause types. For example, the imperative clause type in any language can be defined as a clause construction CHARACTERISTICALLY USED TO ISSUE DIRECTIVES.

However, it's important to bear in mind that 'imperative' and 'directive' are terms for entirely different things, and they DO NOT ALWAYS CORRESPOND. Likewise for the other pairs of terms, so the correlations in [2] cannot be used as accurate definitions of the clause types within English. This chapter is concerned with the syntactic properties of the clause types and the way in which they line up with clause meanings and speech acts. The correlation isn't anywhere near as simple as you might expect.

10.1.1 Where the Correlation Fails

One example in [3] shows a directive that isn't expressed by an imperative, and the other shows an imperative that doesn't express a directive:

[3]	i	CLOSED INTERROGATIVE	<i>Could you please <u>open the door</u>?</i>
	ii	IMPERATIVE	<i><u>Turn up late</u> and you'll be fired.</i>

- Example [i] would normally be used and understood as a directive (specifically, a polite request), and for that reason could appear without a final question mark; but it is of closed interrogative, not imperative type.

- The underlined clause of [ii] has imperative form but would not be interpreted as a directive: the person uttering [ii] is not telling you to turn up late. The sentence is understood as if its first clause were a conditional adjunct: it means “If you turn up late, you’ll be fired”. This of course implies that you should NOT turn up late, so the sentence as a whole does the opposite of telling you to turn up late.

Such cases show that we have to distinguish carefully between CLAUSE TYPE (a syntactic concept) and SPEECH ACT (a pragmatic concept): we should not confuse imperatives with directives, or interrogatives with questions, and so on. Clause type is the major factor determining what kind of speech act will be performed, but it is not the only one.

10.1.2 It’s Clause Type, Not Sentence Type

As the term makes clear, the clause types are kinds of CLAUSE. In the simplest cases the terms can be applied derivatively to sentences, but in more complex cases they cannot. Consider the following examples:

- [4] i *Jess made a mistake.*
 ii *Jess made a mistake, but does it really matter?*
 iii *Do you think Jess made a mistake?*

- In [i], we have a sentence with the form of a declarative clause, so this is one of the simple cases where we could say, derivatively, that [i] is a ‘declarative sentence’.
- In [ii], the sentence has the form of a coordination of clauses, the first of declarative type and the second of closed interrogative type. In such cases it doesn’t make sense to ask which of the five types the sentence as a whole belongs to.
- In [iii], the underlined sequence of words is a declarative clause, but it is merely a part of the larger clause that forms the whole sentence. The underlined clause isn’t a sentence, so it can’t be a declarative sentence.

Clause Type in Main and Subordinate Clauses

The reason we say that *Jess made a mistake* is a declarative clause in [4iii], when it isn’t a main clause and doesn’t make a statement, is that essentially the same syntactic contrasts are found in subordinate clauses as in main clauses. There is one exception: imperatives are normally confined to main clauses. But the other categories are applicable to subordinate clauses too. This is illustrated in [5], where underlining marks the subordinate clauses in the [b] examples:

- | [5] | <small>MAIN CLAUSE</small> | <small>SUBORDINATE CLAUSE</small> |
|-----|-------------------------------------|--|
| i | a. <i>It was a success.</i> | b. <i>The organizers think <u>it was a success</u>.</i> |
| ii | a. <i>Was it a success?</i> | b. <i>She didn’t say <u>whether it was a success</u>.</i> |
| iii | a. <i>How big a success was it?</i> | b. <i>She wants to know <u>how big a success it was</u>.</i> |
| iv | a. <i>What a success it was!</i> | b. <i>He told me <u>what a success it was</u>.</i> |

This further reinforces the need to distinguish between clause type and speech acts. By saying [ib] I don't claim it was a success. By saying [iib] or [iiib] I'm not asking questions about its success. And by uttering [ivb] I'm not making an exclamation about how successful it was.

In this chapter, though, we'll confine our attention to main clauses; clause type in subordinate clauses is dealt with in [Chapter 11](#).

10.1.3 Declarative As the Default Clause Type

We're treating declarative as the default clause type. It's the type that all canonical clauses belong to, by our definition of 'canonical', which simply means we decided to describe declarative clauses first and then go on to explain how other clause types differ from them. Declaratives lack various special syntactic properties seen in the other clause types. In this chapter we focus mainly on the **non-declarative** clause types: closed and open interrogatives ([§10.2](#)), exclamationatives ([§10.3](#)), and imperatives ([§10.4](#)), with a few other minor types illustrated in [§10.5](#).

10.2 Interrogatives and Questions

10.2.1 The Terms 'Closed' and 'Open'

These terms can be applied meaningfully to both interrogatives and questions. *Is Sue here?*, for example, is syntactically a **closed interrogative** and semantically it expresses a **closed question**. As we noted above, the set of possible answers is limited to the two that are directly derivable from the form of the question itself. *Where is Sue?*, by contrast, is syntactically an **open interrogative** and semantically it expresses an **open question**: the possible answers form an open-ended range of possibilities. Again, however, we will see below that there is not a one-to-one correlation between syntax and semantics with respect to the closed vs open distinction.

It's very important to distinguish between an **answer** to a question and a **response** to it. A response is whatever someone says as a result of being asked some question. I might ask: *Is Sue here?*, and you might say *I'm not sure*, or *Who wants to know?*, or *Jill told me not to tell you*, or *You're kidding!*. Those would be responses, but not answers. The question has only two answers: *Yes* and *No*. (Lawyers often have to remind witnesses about this when they ask closed questions.) And referring to 'the answer' to a question normally means "the correct or true answer".

10.2.2 The Form of Closed Interrogatives

Closed interrogative form is marked in main clauses by subject–auxiliary inversion (see §3.2.1): the subject occurs after the auxiliary verb, as in [b] the members of the pairs in [6].

[6]	DECLARATIVE	CLOSED INTERROGATIVE
i	a. <i>It is raining.</i>	b. <i>Is it raining?</i>
ii	a. <i>He can't swim.</i>	b. <i>Can't he swim?</i>
iii	a. <i>The doctor recommended it.</i>	b. <i>Did the doctor recommend it?</i>

- In [i–ii] the closed interrogative differs from its declarative counterpart by having subject and auxiliary verb in the reverse order.
- If, as in [iii], the declarative does not contain an auxiliary, the dummy auxiliary *do* appears in the interrogative, as described in §3.2.1.

Closed Interrogatives versus Other Subject–Auxiliary Inversion Clauses

Inversion is not restricted to closed interrogatives, but elsewhere it normally occurs only when certain kinds of element begin the clause, as in [7]:

[7]	i <i><u>Never</u> had I seen her so furious.</i>	}	[declarative]
	ii <i>Jill approved of it and <u>so</u> did her husband.</i>		
	iii <i><u>Why</u> are you looking at me like that?</i>		[open interrogative]

- In [i], and the bracketed clause of [ii], which belong to the default declarative category, the inversion is triggered by the occurrence in initial position of a negative adjunct (*never*) and a connective (*so*).
- In [iii], the inversion is triggered by the initial interrogative element *why*, a marker of the open interrogative clause type.

Rising Intonation As a Marker of Questions

A closed question can be signalled by means of a rise in the intonation (represented by ‘↗’) instead of by a different syntactic form:

- [8] i *You're sure you can afford it↗?*
 ii *So they offered her \$50 but she refused↗?*

These are closed QUESTIONS, with *Yes* and *No* as the answers; they are not, however, closed INTERROGATIVE CLAUSES. Use of intonation to mark a question does not change the syntactic clause type. This is evident from examples like [ii]. We saw above that clause type applies specifically to clauses, but here we have a coordination of clauses, and the rising intonation gives a question meaning to the coordination as a whole, not the individual clauses. The answers are *Yes, they offered her \$50 but she refused* and *No, it's not the case that they offered her \$50 but she refused*. The two

clauses are declaratives, but INTONATION OVERRIDES CLAUSE TYPE in determining what kind of speech act is performed. As we pointed out in §10.1, clause type is the major factor in determining what kind of speech act is performed, but it isn't the only one. Intonation is one of the additional factors, but even here there are falling-intonation questions and rising-intonation non-questions.

10.2.3 Two Kinds of Closed Questions

There are two kinds of closed question, with the answers derived in different ways: **polar questions** and **alternative questions**.

- [9] i POLAR QUESTIONS
- a. *Did I tell you Tomo was leaving?*
 - b. *Didn't I tell you Tomo was leaving?*
- ii ALTERNATIVE QUESTIONS
- a. *Is the meeting today, tomorrow, or Friday?*
 - b. *Is the Kensington Runestone genuine, or is it a hoax?*

Polar Questions

In a **polar question** the answers are *Yes* and *No*, one being equivalent to the corresponding statement, the other to that statement's polar opposite, i.e., its negative or positive counterpart.

- In [ia] the corresponding statement is the positive *I told you Tomo was leaving*, so one answer is equivalent to this, and the other to its negative counterpart *I didn't tell you Tomo was leaving*.
- In [ib] the corresponding statement is the negative *I didn't tell you Tomo was leaving*, so one answer is equivalent to this and the other to its positive counterpart *I told you Tomo was leaving*.

The two questions in [i] have the same two answers. The positive question is the default or neutral member of the pair. The negative question, by contrast, would be used in a context where the speaker was expecting a specific one of the answers. It might be that I had thought I'd told you that Tomo was leaving, but recent evidence (such as your surprise at Tomo's empty desk) suggests that I hadn't told you. That would lead me to expect a negative answer. Or it might be that I remember clearly that I did tell you she was leaving, and I'm surprised at you for forgetting it. In that case I want you to admit that I told you, and I expect a positive answer.

Alternative Questions

An **alternative question** contains a coordination of elements linked by *or*, and the answers derive from the separate coordinated elements.

- In [iia] there are three answers: *It is today*; *It is tomorrow*; and *It is next Monday*.
- Similarly in [iib] there are two answers: *It is genuine*, and *It is a hoax*.

Note that the *or* in [9iib] joins whole clauses, so it's not a marker of a distinct clause type. What we have is a coordination of TWO CLOSED INTERROGATIVE CLAUSES expressing A SINGLE ALTERNATIVE QUESTION.

While an *or*-coordination is an essential component of an alternative question, it's possible to have one in other kinds of speech act, even a polar question. However, we can tell them apart because of an intonation difference, as seen in [10]:

- [10] i *Do you want me to give it to mum↗ or dad↘?* [alternative question]
 ii *Do you want me to give it to mum or dad↗?* [polar question]

The arrows indicate the main direction of the intonation towards the end.

- Version [i], with rising intonation on *mum* and falling intonation on *dad*, is an alternative question: I take it for granted that you want me to give it to one parent, and ask which one. The alternative answers are *I want you to give it to mum* and *I want you to give it to dad*.
- Version [ii] does not have a separate intonational rise on *mum* but has a rise at the end. It is a polar question with the answers *Yes, I want you to give it to mum or dad* and *No, I don't want you to give it to mum or dad*.

10.2.4 Interrogative Tags

A special case of the closed interrogative is in the **interrogative tags** that are appended to some clauses, usually declaratives:

- [11] i *Your brother looked pretty embarrassed, didn't he?*
 ii *We haven't done anything wrong, have we?*

The tags here are closed interrogatives reduced to just an auxiliary verb and a pronoun subject. (In a much more formal style, the word *not* may be found at the end, as in *did he not?*; but this is rare, and virtually non-existent in speech today.) Everything else is left implicit, because it's recoverable from the preceding clause.

As noted in §9.1, the most usual construction has a **reversed polarity tag**: the polarity of the tag is the reverse of that of the first clause.

- In [i], for example, the declarative is positive and the tag negative.
- In [ii], by contrast, the declarative is negative and the tag positive.

Such tags are used to seek confirmation of the statement expressed in the declarative clause.

The last type, [iic], with the interrogative word not fronted but left in the body of the clause, is restricted to contexts that typically involve sustained questioning, like courtroom interrogations (*And after you did that you went where?*), or classroom interactions (*So we apply which operation to the fraction?*), or quiz shows (*For ten bonus points: Tirana is the capital of which European country?*). In other contexts, non-subject interrogative phrases are almost always fronted.

Case

Who, *whom*, and *whose* are respectively nominative, accusative, and genitive forms of the pronoun *who*. The choice between *who* and *whom* – like the choice between nominative and accusative forms of the personal pronouns (§5.8.3) – depends on two factors: **function** and **style level**. The style factor, however, applies differently than it does with the personal pronouns. With the personal pronouns the accusative form is used in certain constructions as a less formal variant of the nominative: *It wasn't me who told them* is less formal than *It wasn't I who told them*. With *who*, things are the other way round: it's the nominative form that is less formal (in fact we mark the formal variety as only used by some speakers):

- | | | | | |
|------|-----|----|---|--------------------------------------|
| [14] | i | a. | <u>Who</u> wrote the editorial? | [subject: nominative] |
| | ii | a. | <u>Whom</u> / <u>Who</u> did Mia meet in Paris? | [object: accusative or nominative] |
| | iii | a. | ⁰ <u>For whom</u> / * <u>For who</u> did you vote? | [object of preposition: acc or nom] |
| | | b. | ⁰ <u>Whom</u> / <u>Who</u> did you vote for? | |
| | iv | a. | <u>Who</u> was she? | [predicative complement: nominative] |

- When the pronoun is subject of a tensed clause it again appears in the nominative, as in [i], as with personal pronouns.
- Both versions of [ii] will be found, but *whom* is strikingly formal, and *who* would be preferred in conversational spoken English by almost any speaker.
- When the pronoun is an object in a PP, as in [iii], we need to distinguish between the two constructions discussed in §7.5.
 - In [iiia] the preposition is fronted together with *who* and forms part of the interrogative phrase. This is quite formal, and would hardly ever occur in conversation. If it were used, though, the initial preposition would require accusative *whom*.
 - In [iiib] the preposition is stranded (and hence not part of the interrogative phrase). This is very much more common, except in formal style, and very strongly favours *who*.
- When *who* in predicative complement function is fronted, it is always nominative, as in [iv].

Multiple Interrogative Phrases

It is possible to have more than one interrogative phrase in a clause; but only one can be fronted and have prenucleus function:

- [15] i Who went where? [subject *who*, locative complement *where*]
 ii What did you give to whom? [prenucleus *what*, PP object *whom*]

10.2.6 Answers to Questions with Open Interrogative Form

The answers to questions expressed by open interrogatives are derivable by replacing the interrogative phrases by appropriate non-interrogative ones, which we'll call **replacement phrases**. Such replacement in the questions in [13] leads to the possible answers given in [16] (where the replacement phrase is underlined):

- [16] i Her father called the police.
 ii They picked the most recent version.
 iii Those are cigarette burns.
 iv After that we went home.

Very often the answer is reduced to just the replacement phrase, since the rest is obvious from the question and doesn't need to be repeated.

Usage Controversy Note

It is a notorious practice among teachers of young children to ask them open questions and then treat correct answers consisting of replacement phrases as wrong. In answer to 'What is the first book of the Bible?' the children are expected not to say 'Genesis' (the natural way to phrase the right answer); they are meant to say 'The first book of the Bible is Genesis.' The intent is clearly to inculcate the practice of writing sentences, not fragments. But this is a singularly poor way to do it. Every speaker of English knows how to form sentences. Tuition in grammar begins (as [Chapter 2](#) of this book did) with the concepts of sentence, clause, word, and phrase. But giving full-sentence answers to open questions is totally foreign to ordinary use of the language under most circumstances; supplying replacement phrases as answers is completely natural. Punishing children for making the most natural use of their language, and trying to force them to do what is unnatural, is cruel and unproductive – the kind of teacher behaviour that alienates children from schooling.

Appropriate Replacements

What counts as an appropriate replacement phrase depends on the interrogative phrase, especially on the particular interrogative word it contains. Here are some very simple cases where the interrogative word is head of the interrogative phrase:

- *Who* and *whom* need replacements denoting entities conceived of as persons, such as humans or sometimes animals or robots (*Who is that bone for?* – *Rex*).
- *Whose* is similar, but needs a genitive replacement (*Whose bike is this?* – *Mary's*).
- *What* is generally for things not conceived of as persons (*What was he wearing?* – *A suit*), but when it's a predicative complement its replacement can be an indication of role, occupation, religion, etc. (*What is Jill?* – *She's a teacher*, or *She's Roman Catholic*). This includes situations (see §3.4), usually in conjunction with verbs like *happen* (*What happened?*), for which the answer is typically an entire clause (*They finally saw the light*), or *do* (*What were they doing?*), in which cases the replacement is usually a VP (*They were gesticulating wildly*).
- *When*, *where*, and *why* call for replacements denoting times, places, and reasons, respectively (*When did they leave?* – *Yesterday*; *Where are you going?* – *To the bank*; *Why are you late?* – *Because I missed my flight*).
- When *how* is an adverb in adjunct function it generally questions manner or means (*How did you fix it?* – *By changing the battery*; *How did you sleep?* – *Very well*).
- *How* can also be an adjective, functioning as prenucleus. Here it permits a fairly small range of answers, typically indicating state of health or evaluation (*How are you?* – *Very well*; *How was the concert?* – *Excellent*).

There are also cases where the interrogative word is a dependent in the interrogative phrase:

- When the words *what* and *which* function as determiners in NP structure, the replacements must be consistent with the head noun. So *What video shall we get?* and *Which video shall we get?* need replacements referring to a video. The difference between *what* and *which* is that the latter implies selection from some definite set; in the example given, *which* suggests prior mention or presence of a number of videos, with the question asking for a choice between them.
- *How* can function as degree modifier in AdjP, AdvP, or DP. The replacement must have the right sort of meaning to fit the function: *How wide is it?* can be answered by *Two inches* (or *Two inches wide*); *How many copies do you need?* can be answered by *Fifteen*; *How fast were they going?* can be answered by *About fifty miles an hour*.

Open Interrogative Form May Express Closed Questions

We have said that open interrogatives are characteristically used to express open questions but, as is tacitly implied by the qualification 'characteristically', they are sometimes used to express what are effectively closed questions:

- [17] i *What gear are you in?*
 ii *Which of the parents was awarded custody of the children?*
 iii *When is the meeting – today, tomorrow, or next Monday?*

In the case of [i], spoken to the driver of a car, there will usually only be four or five answers. In [ii] there are only two. (As we noted above, *which* implies selection from some definite set and hence will very often occur in these effectively closed questions.) A special case is illustrated in [iii]. This expresses in effect an alternative question, equivalent to [9iia] above; it has an *or*-coordination defining a closed set of answers appended as a supplement, which retrospectively delimits the expected answers.

What all this shows us is that the GRAMMATICAL categories of closed and open interrogatives CANNOT BE DEFINED at the language-particular level in terms of closed and open questions. They must be defined in terms of the syntactic properties described above: subject–auxiliary inversion for closed interrogatives (in the case of main clauses), and the presence of one or more of the interrogative words *who*, *what*, *where*, etc., for open interrogatives. The imperfect correlation with closed and open questions, however, provides the basis for using the general terms ‘closed’ and ‘open’ interrogatives for these categories of English clauses.

10.2.7 Information Questions and Direction Questions

In all the questions considered so far, the answers have been statements. We’ll call the questions with statements as answers to **information questions**. There’s also a less frequent type of question, **direction questions**, whose answers are directives. The questions in the [a] examples in [18] are closed (polar), those in the [b] ones open.

- | | | | |
|------|----|---------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| [18] | i | INFORMATION QUESTION | POSSIBLE ANSWER (STATEMENT) |
| | a. | <i>Did you open the window?</i> | <i>Yes, I did.</i> |
| | b. | <i>What did you give her?</i> | <i>I gave her a responsible job.</i> |
| | ii | DIRECTION QUESTION | POSSIBLE ANSWER (DIRECTIVE) |
| | a. | <i>Shall I open the window?</i> | <i>Yes, please do.</i> |
| | b. | <i>What can we give her?</i> | <i>Let’s give her the lead role.</i> |

10.2.8 Echo Questions

One distinctive type of (information) question is the **echo question**, uttered in response to a preceding utterance which we call the **stimulus**:

- | | | | |
|------|----|--------------------------------------|--|
| [19] | | STIMULUS | ECHO QUESTION |
| | i | a. <i>She wrote to the minister.</i> | b. <i>She wrote to the minister↗?</i> [closed (polar)] |
| | ii | a. <i>He invited Arthur.</i> | b. <i>He invited who↗?</i> [open] |

Echo questions serve to check or clarify a stimulus that wasn’t clearly perceived or was surprising. They can be closed or open. Closed echo questions are usually of the polar type.

- A polar echo typically repeats the stimulus in full or in reduced form and has sharply rising intonation; it's used to check whether I correctly heard what you said (or meant to say), or to express scepticism about it.
- An open echo repeats the stimulus with an interrogative word substituted for part of it – the part that's specifically in need of confirmation or clarification. The interrogative word in an echo question is never fronted: it occupies the same position as the part of the stimulus that it substitutes for.

10.3 Exclamatives

10.3.1 The Structure of Exclamative Clauses

The peculiar clause type known as the **exclamative** clause is much less frequent than the others. Many such clauses have a rather literary feel, and the construction is hardly ever used by younger speakers. It's always marked by an initial exclamative phrase that begins with either adjective *what* or adverb *how*. An exclamative subject occupies its ordinary position before the first verb, but an exclamative non-subject is obligatorily fronted:

- [20] i SUBJECT *What lovely people work in this great company!*
 ii NON-SUBJECT a. *What a tyrant he was! *He was what a tyrant!*
 b. *How clever you are! *You are how clever!*

Exclamatives versus Exclamations

A clause is not exclamative just because it expresses some kind of exclamation. There are many ways of conveying **exclamatory meaning** besides using exclamative clause type. A very common way in contemporary informal speech involves using closed interrogative forms without the usual rising intonation of questions: *Are you people lovely or what?* for [20i], or *Was he ever a tyrant?* instead of [20iia], for example. But there are lots of others:

- [21] i a. *Get the hell out of here!* b. *What the hell are you doing?*
 ii a. *Look at that fantastic sunset!* b. *Who saw that fantastic sunset?*
 iii a. *Don't be so utterly dumb!* b. *Why are you so utterly dumb?*

The exclamatory component of the meaning is expressed here by *the hell* in [i], *fantastic* in [ii], and *so utterly* in [iii]. These are completely independent of clause type. They combine with imperative structure in the [a] examples and with open interrogatives in the [b] ones.

What and *how* in [20], by contrast, are restricted to the particular clause type we call exclamative. They're completely impossible in imperatives or open interrogatives:

- [22] a. **Don't be what a tyrant.* b. **Why are you what a tyrant?*

That's why in [2] at the beginning of the chapter we said the CHARACTERISTIC use of exclamation was making an **exclamatory statement** – we didn't simply say that exclamation are clauses that express an exclamation.

10.3.2 Exclamative *What* and *How*

What and *how* occur in either exclamative or open interrogative clauses, but with some clear differences in grammar and meaning.

- In exclamatives, *what* has the syntax of an adjective functioning as an external modifier of an NP (*What a great day that was!*), while in interrogatives it's a determinative (*What day was that?*).
- Exclamative *how* is an adverb of degree modifying an AdjP (*How tall you are!*), and is never understood as standing for a predicative adjective the way it is in interrogatives (*How was the meeting?*).
- The pattern seen in *Are these people lovely or what?* is another example of colloquial exclamatory uses of interrogatives; it isn't an exclamative and doesn't illustrate the NP-modifying exclamative *what*.

10.4 Imperatives and Directives

10.4.1 The Form of Imperative Clauses

The major syntactic features distinguishing imperative clauses from declaratives are as stated in [23]. Examples are given in [24].

- [23] i The predicand always denotes the addressee (or addressees).
 ii The subject is almost always omitted.
 iii The verb is always in the plain form.
 iv Auxiliary *do* is required in verb negation even with *be*.

- | | | |
|--------|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| [24] | DECLARATIVE | IMPERATIVE |
| i a. | <i>You told her the truth.</i> | b. <i>Tell her the truth.</i> |
| ii a. | <i>You should be more tolerant.</i> | b. <i>Be more tolerant.</i> |
| iii a. | <i>Everybody follows me.</i> | b. <i>Everybody, follow me.</i> |
| iv a. | <i>You aren't impetuous.</i> | b. <i>Don't be impetuous.</i> |

- In [ia] the subject is obligatory, whereas [ib] illustrates the usual form of imperatives, with the subject *you* understood. It's possible to include *you* (*You tell her the truth!*), but this is much less common, and may have a rather peremptory or impolite tone to it.

- Examples [ii] and [iii] show the verb-form difference: *should* and *follows* are present tense forms; *be* and *follow* are plain forms. As we noted in §3.1.2, plain present tense forms and plain forms nearly always have the same shape; as a result, the verb in an imperative is distinct from that of a present tense declarative in just two cases: with the verb *be* as in [ii], and with a 3rd person singular subject, like the *everybody* of [iii]. The modal auxiliary verbs don't have plain forms, so they can never head imperative clauses.
- In [iv], we see the difference with respect to auxiliary *do*: it's not permitted in the declarative version (**You don't usually be impetuous*) but it's required in the imperative (see §9.3.1).

10.4.2 First Person Imperatives

Most imperative clauses have a 2nd person predicand, usually unexpressed (*Stop that!*), but less commonly overt (*You stop that!*). In certain cases 3rd person subjects are found, like *everybody* in [24iii] (it means “everybody among you or us”). But there is also a distinct minor subtype of imperative construction understood as 1st person plural. It is marked by a specialized use of the verb *let*:

[25]	ORDINARY <i>let</i>	1ST PERSON IMPERATIVE <i>let</i>
i	a. <i>They let us have our ball back.</i>	b. <i>Let's go and get our ball back.</i>
ii	a. <i>He didn't let us go to the meeting.</i>	b. ^{9b} <i>Don't let's go to the meeting.</i>
iii	a. <i>He let us not attend the meeting.</i>	b. <i>Let's not go to the meeting.</i>

This specialized use of *let* differs from the ordinary verb *let* (meaning “allow”) in four ways:

- The specialized *let* CANNOT HAVE A SUBJECT (cf. **You let's get our ball back*). It's the verb FOLLOWING *let* that is understood with a 1st person plural predicand, *us*.
- There's a clear meaning difference in terms of scope between [iia] and [iiia]: [iia] means “He refused us permission to attend” (*let* is within the scope of negation), while [iiia] means “He gave us permission to stay away” (*let* is outside the scope of negation). There's no such difference between [iib] and [iiib]: *let* is just a marker of the construction, with no independent meaning, so the possibility of it falling within the scope of the negation (see §9.5) doesn't arise. Both versions ask or propose that we not attend the meeting. (*Don't let's* is highly informal and not everyone accepts it.)
- Specialized *let* allows reduction to 's for the pronoun *us* (in fact it's almost always reduced, except in the fixed phrase *Let us pray*; spelling it out as *us* is very formal style). The reduction is not possible at all with ordinary *let*.
- Normally *us* can refer to either you and me or me and someone else (see §5.8.2). But in 1st person imperatives the *us* (or 's) is always understood as INCLUSIVE OF THE

ADDRESSEE(S): in [ib], for example, it's a matter of me and you getting back a ball that belongs to you and me.

10.4.3 Uses of the Imperative

Imperatives as Directives

Issuing directives is the characteristic use of imperatives. Directives include a wide range of more specific types of speech act:

- | | | | |
|------|-----|--------------|--|
| [26] | i | ORDERS | <i>Stand up. Keep off the grass. Get out of my way. Stand clear!</i> |
| | ii | REQUESTS | <i>Please, pass the salt. Kindly tell Sir Randolph we're here.</i> |
| | iii | INSTRUCTIONS | <i>Shake well before using. Press tune mode and select 'Manual'.</i> |
| | iv | ADVICE | <i>Sell now while prices are high. Watch your step on the way out.</i> |
| | v | INVITATIONS | <i>Come and have lunch. Step this way. Feel free to contact me.</i> |
| | vi | PERMISSIONS | <i>Come in. Make yourself at home. Take as many as you need.</i> |

The kind of directive an utterance is understood to express will depend on such factors as context and tone of voice, though there are some linguistic devices that specifically serve to distinguish requests from orders, such as the adverbs *please* and *kindly* in [ii].

Imperatives as Wishes

Imperatives can be used to express certain kinds of positive wish for the future that couldn't possibly be confused with commands:

- [27] *Sleep well. Have a great weekend. Get well soon.*

These differ from directives in that the situations concerned are not even under your control. I'm not instructing you to sleep well, have a great weekend, or recover: I'm expressing a hope. This usage is restricted to a quite narrow range of situations like being comfortable, having fun, enjoying good luck, or recovering from illness or injury.

Imperatives as Conditions

- [28] i *Invite one without the other* *and there'll be trouble.*
 ii *Help me this once* *and I'll never ask you again.*

Here the imperative clauses (underlined) are the first element in a coordination construction that has a conditional interpretation: "If you invite one without the other, there'll be trouble", "If you help me this once I'll never ask you again". The second element in the coordination indicates the consequence of fulfilling the condition that is indirectly expressed in the imperative. The interpretation of the whole depends on whether the consequence is assumed to be undesirable or desirable.

- In [i], trouble is undesirable, so you certainly won't take the imperative as a directive.
- In [ii], however, the consequence (my never asking you for help again) is desirable, so the imperative retains its force as a request.

10.4.4 Non-Imperative Directives

The imperative construction can be used for various kinds of directive, both telling (where I expect compliance) and asking (where you may decline). But other clause types are often used to make the speaker's intentions somewhat clearer.

Interrogatives as Directives

It is particularly common for closed interrogatives to be used for requests:

- [29] i *Will you feed the cat?*
 ii *Could you help me with moving the piano, please.*
 iii *Would you mind turning your radio down a little.*

In many contexts directives of this form are considered more polite than imperatives. This is because instead of overtly directing your behaviour they ask you questions about what you're prepared to do, and the directive is conveyed only indirectly via the pragmatics.

Declaratives as Directives

- [30] i *I urge you to leave while there's still time.*
 ii *You will drive her to the airport and then report back to me.*
 iii *I want you to mow the lawn this weekend.*

- In [i], the verb **urge** denotes a speech act and hence makes explicit what kind of directive is intended: a firm entreaty.
- In [ii], I'm telling you what you will be doing, but since the situation is under your control (you're the driver), in effect I'm giving you an order, though indirectly and implicitly.
- In [iii], I'm saying what I want you to do, and in a context where I have some relevant kind of authority or control over you that indirectly or implicitly tells you to do it.

10.5 Performative Use of Speech Act Verbs

The phenomenon illustrated in [30i], where it permits a declarative to be used as a directive, applies much more generally. A verb denoting a speech act can be used

in the present tense to constitute a performance of a speech act it denotes. Numerous verbs denoting other kinds of speech act can be used in this way:

- [31] i *I promise I won't tell anyone.*
 ii *I congratulate you on an excellent speech.*
 iii *I apologize for what I did.*

Uttering [i], if you're sincere, actually makes a promise not to tell anyone. By saying [ii] I actually congratulate you. Uttering [iii] accomplishes making an apology for doing what I did. Promising, congratulating, and apologizing are all kinds of speech act, things you do in the act of uttering the sentence. The verbs here are said to be used **performatively**, i.e., in the performance of the speech act they denote.

Verbs denoting speech acts aren't always used performatively. If I say *I promised I wouldn't tell anyone* I am not **MAKING** a promise; I'm merely making a statement about having made one in the past. Similarly, I can't congratulate you by saying *I'll congratulate you if you manage it*, or apologize by saying *I expect he'll apologize*. The performative use of speech act verbs needs a **1ST PERSON SUBJECT** and a **PRESENT TENSE FORM** of the speech act verb.

10.6 Minor Clause Types

Most main clauses fall into one or other of the five clause types listed in [1] at the beginning of this chapter. But there are a few other minor and marginal patterns, mostly involving fixed formulae or fragmentary structures. The following is a small sample. The ones in [32i] are main clause subjunctives (see §3.1.1); those in [ii] involve initial modals in non-interrogative clauses; and the ones in [iii] and [iv], though used like sentences, have no verb. So if we strictly adhere to the definition (that a clause is a phrase with a VP as its head), they aren't clauses, though in being used as whole sentences they are used exactly as if they were main clauses.

- [32] i *Long live the Queen. Suffice it to say that the matter is being studied. So be it.*
 Heaven help you if you do this again. God bless America.
 ii *May you be forgiven. Would to God I had never heard of Facebook.*
 iii *Out of my way! Off with his head! Hands up! Into the bin with it!*
 iv *The more the merrier. No pain, no gain. Out of sight, out of mind.*

Exercises on Chapter 10

.....

1. Classify the following according to **clause type**, and say what kind of speech act they would most likely be used to perform.
 - i *Please turn the light on.*
 - ii *I advise you to accept their offer.*
 - iii *I advised her to accept their offer.*
 - iv *Can you close that door please.*
 - v *You're leaving already?*
 - vi *Where shall I put my coat?*
 - vii *What a senseless waste of human life it was.*
 - viii *Have a nice day.*
 - ix *Aren't we lucky!*
 - x *Allow me to congratulate you.*

2. Form **open interrogatives** from the following **declaratives**, replacing the underlined phrase with a corresponding interrogative phrase such as *who*, *what*, *when*, etc.
 - i *She said something to them.*
 - ii *Someone has taken my umbrella.*
 - iii *He sold his car to someone.*
 - iv *He thinks they'll appoint someone.*
 - v *They left early for some reason.*
 - vi *You told her I was going somewhere.*
 - vii *You first suspected he was the murderer at some time.*
 - viii *Things have changed for you in some way since last year.*
 - ix *You think someone has the most influence with these people.*
 - x *We can get somebody to clear up this mess.*

3. Attach the most natural-sounding **reversed polarity tags** to the following declaratives.
 - i *You don't know where to put it.*
 - ii *She believes everything you say.*
 - iii *Everyone thought it was impossible.*
 - iv *They used to live in Baltimore.*
 - v *There is no future for us.*
 - vi *I guess all's well that ends well.*
 - vii *You've got kids yourself.*
 - viii *Nobody really cares about the environment.*
 - ix *On the table stood a bone china fruit bowl.*
 - x *I don't suppose you'd like to go to a movie.*

4. Interrogative tags can also be attached to **imperative** clauses, as in *Don't tell anyone, will you?* What tags could naturally be added to the following? (Where both reversed and constant polarity tags can be used, give them both, and comment on any difference between them.)
- i *Give this letter to Angela.*
 - ii *Don't show the letter to Angela.*
 - iii *Take your feet off the sofa.*
 - iv *Let's take a break.*
 - v *Let's not waste any more time.*
5. The following clauses are given without any final punctuation mark to avoid prejudicing things, so they don't conform to normal written English. For each one, say whether it is (a) an **open interrogative**; (b) an **exclamative**; or (c) **ambiguous** between open interrogative and exclamative. If your answer is (a) or (b), explain what grammatical factors make the clause unambiguous. If your answer is (c), comment on the difference in meaning.
- i *Who thinks it was awesome*
 - ii *How much remains to be done*
 - iii *How did you convince them*
 - iv *What a success it was*
 - v *How often you have forgotten to lock up*
 - vi *What idiot devised this plan*
 - vii *Who cares about your stupid project*
 - viii *What kind of establishment do you think this is*
 - ix *How wonderful you look tonight*
 - x *Why don't you give them a chance*
6. [Supplementary exercise] Explain how the following non-standard constructions differ from Standard English. All those with question marks are intended as questions.
- i **Do not to drink or eat until your host does.*
 - ii **Excuse me, Janet is here?*
 - iii **When she will be back?*
 - iv **How to say this?*
 - v **Stop! Not to come in.*
 - vi **What for should we do this?*
 - vii *¹What you look at me like that for?*
 - viii *¹Why did he want to make all that trouble for?*
 - ix *¹Why we have to write this?*
 - x *¹Who that is?*

7. [Supplementary exercise] Which of the interrogative words can be used to form open interrogatives that do not involve subject–auxiliary inversion? What properties do they share?
8. Compose an original example to illustrate each of the following.
 - i a closed question and a typical and natural response that is NOT an answer
 - ii a declarative that functions as a request
 - iii a closed interrogative that functions as a suggestion
 - iv an open interrogative that functions as a closed question
 - v a grammatical open interrogative using *whom*
 - vi a clause with multiple interrogative phrases
 - vii a direction question
 - viii an echo question (give the preceding context as well)
 - ix an exclamative with an exclamative phrase in subject function
 - x a clause that is ambiguous between exclamative and interrogative
9. What is the category of the underlined constituents?
 - i What a worm I am for drinking too much!
 - ii What a nice surprise!
 - iii How strange a day this was!
 - iv How perceptive!
 - v How artfully you did that!
 - vi How kind of you!
10. [Supplementary exercise] Can non-affirmative items, discussed in the [previous chapter](#), appear in all of the clause types discussed in this chapter? If so, give examples of each. If not, provide evidence.
11. [Supplementary exercise] Construct three original examples of closed interrogatives that are ambiguous (in written form) between a polar question and an alternative question.
12. [Supplementary exercise] In which of the following examples could *who* be replaced with *whom* in a formal style?
 - i Who did they hire?
 - ii Who did you expect to be knocking on your door at this time of night?
 - iii Who does he have in mind here?
 - iv Who does it belong to?
 - v Who else would have dared to bring this innocent and ignorant creature?
 - vi Who exactly are we encouraging when they should not be encouraged?
 - vii Who knows how we might positively impact even one young person?
 - viii Who was he?
 - ix Who was the prophet for that tribe?
 - x Who would you like to influence that you're not already influencing?

11

Subordinate Clauses

11.1 Subordination

Subordination, in grammar, means embedding a clause somewhere within another clause, as in *She thought [you were angry] back then*, or *If [they go out of business] we're in trouble*. The bracketed clauses function as dependents within a higher, more inclusive construction, and are called **subordinate clauses**.

The next higher (i.e., larger) clause in the structure – the one immediately containing the subordinate clause – is called its **matrix clause**. This shouldn't be confused with a main clause: a matrix clause may or may not be the main clause of the whole sentence (just as your immediate boss in a company may or may not be the chief executive). A matrix clause may itself be a subordinate clause, as in *Tim says [Sue thought [you were angry]]*, where *Sue thought you were angry* is the matrix clause within which *you were angry* is embedded.

Subordinate clauses often differ in their internal structure from main clauses. Some typical differences are illustrated in [1], where the subordinate clauses are underlined (and in all the [b] cases the matrix clause happens to be the main clause):

[1]	MAIN CLAUSE	SUBORDINATE CLAUSE
i	a. <i>She is the best candidate.</i>	b. <i>I agree <u>that she is the best candidate.</u></i>
ii	a. <i>He was looking at a photo.</i>	b. <i>This is the photo <u>he was looking at.</u></i>
iii	a. <i>I gave him my name.</i>	b. <i>I made the mistake of <u>giving him my name.</u></i>

- The underlined clause in [ib], a dependent in clause structure, is marked as subordinate by its introductory word *that*, which is a **subordinator**.
- The underlined clause in [iib], a dependent in NP structure, is marked as subordinate by having a missing NP, the understood object of the *at* PP.
- The underlined clause in [iiib], a dependent in PP structure, is marked as subordinate by having no subject (though a subject is understood) and having its verb in gerund-participle form.

The differences are greater in infinitival and participial clauses than in tensed or subjunctive ones. In this chapter and the next two, we focus on clauses such as those in [ib] and [iib]. We turn to tenseless ones like [iii] in [Chapter 14](#).

11.1.1 Content Clause as the Default Subordinate Clause

There are three major subclasses of tensed subordinate clause, illustrated in [2]:

- | | | | |
|-----|-----|--------------------|---|
| [2] | i | RELATIVE CLAUSE | <i>They weren't among the people <u>who had been invited</u>.</i> |
| | ii | COMPARATIVE CLAUSE | <i>More people came than <u>had been invited</u>.</i> |
| | iii | CONTENT CLAUSE | <i>I didn't think <u>that those people had been invited</u>.</i> |

- The relative clause underlined in [i] has as its subject a relative pronoun *who*, which has the preceding noun *people* as its antecedent.
- The comparative clause underlined in [ii] has no subject at all (though the sentence is understood as if it had said something distinctly more complex, like *The number of people who came was more than the number of people who had been invited*).
- Content clauses don't have special properties of this kind. They differ less radically from main clauses, and indeed are often structurally identical with main clauses. We can regard them as the default kind of subordinate clause. Relative and comparative clauses differ from them in certain distinctive ways described in [Chapter 12](#) and [Chapter 13](#).

The content clause in [iii] is introduced by the subordinator *that*, but the rest of the clause does not differ from that of the main clause *These people had been invited*. And the subordinator is in fact optional here: *I don't think these people had been invited* is also grammatical.

Content clauses function predominantly as complements within the larger construction: the one cited here, for example, is a complement in the VP headed by *think*.

11.2 Clause Type in Content Clauses

The system of clause type described for main clauses in [Chapter 10](#) applies also to content clauses, except that imperatives are normally restricted to main clauses. In [3] we illustrate main and content clauses of the other four types:

- | | | | |
|-----|-----|----------------------|--|
| [3] | | MAIN CLAUSE | CONTENT CLAUSE |
| | i | DECLARATIVE | <i><u>Yoko is in Paris.</u></i> <i>He says <u>that Yoko is in Paris.</u></i> |
| | ii | CLOSED INTERROGATIVE | <i><u>Did he do it?</u></i> <i>I wonder <u>whether he did it.</u></i> |
| | iii | OPEN INTERROGATIVE | <i><u>What do you want?</u></i> <i>Tell me <u>what you want.</u></i> |
| | iv | EXCLAMATIVE | <i><u>What a bargain it is!</u></i> <i>Tell her <u>what a bargain it is.</u></i> |

In the following three sections we survey declarative, interrogative, and exclamative content clauses one by one. They have striking structural differences.

11.3 Declarative Content Clauses

11.3.1 The Subordinator *That*

The major feature that can distinguish declarative content clauses from their main clause counterparts is the subordinator *that*. It is sometimes obligatory, sometimes optional, and sometimes inadmissible:

	WITH SUBORDINATOR <i>that</i>	WITHOUT SUBORDINATOR <i>that</i>
i OBLIGATORY	<u><i>That I need help</i></u> is clear.	* <u><i>I need help</i></u> is clear.
ii INADMISSIBLE	* <i>I left before <u>that he arrived</u>.</i>	<i>I left before <u>he arrived</u>.</i>
iii OPTIONAL	<i>I know <u>that it's genuine</u>.</i>	<i>I know <u>it's genuine</u>.</i>

- The main place where *that* is obligatory is where the content clause is subject of the matrix clause, as in [4i]. It is likewise obligatory if the content clause is fronted so as to precede the subject, as in *That I need help* *I can't deny*.
- *That* is inadmissible in a clause that is a complement licensed by a preposition like *before* in [ii]. Most prepositions exclude *that*; there are just a few (such as *notwithstanding*, *given*, *in order*, and *provided*) which allow it.
- Elsewhere, *that* is in general optional, as in [iii]. It is more likely to be omitted in informal than in formal style, and it is more likely to be omitted after short and common verbs than after longer and less frequent ones. For example, in *This will demonstrate that our results were not a fluke* the subordinator is much less likely to be omitted than it would be in *I know that it's genuine* (about five times less likely).

11.3.2 Declaratives as Complement

Declarative content clauses mostly function as a complement in VPs, NPs, AdjPs, or PPs. The range of complement functions is illustrated in [5]:

i SUBJECT	<u><i>That they passed</i></u> didn't surprise us.
ii EXTRAPOSED SUBJECT	<i>It didn't surprise us <u>that they passed</u>.</i>
iii INTERNAL COMPLEMENT	a. <i>I realize <u>that you feel insulted</u>.</i> b. <i>She informed me <u>that she'd been accepted</u>.</i> c. <i>The problem is <u>that we just can't afford it</u>.</i>
iv COMPLEMENT OF NOUN	<i>You can't ignore the fact <u>that he was there</u>.</i>
v COMPLEMENT OF ADJECTIVE	<i>I'm so glad <u>that you could come</u>.</i>
vi COMPLEMENT OF PREPOSITION	<i>You can go provided <u>that you're careful</u>.</i>

- In [i], the content clause is **subject** of the matrix clause. It is an **external complement** licensed by *surprise* (see §4.1).
- In [ii], we see a kind of construction that is much more frequent than [i], but synonymous with it: the subordinate clause is **extraposed**. That is, it is placed after the VP in the matrix clause (*didn't surprise us*), with the dummy pronoun *it* as a placeholder in the subject position (see §16.3.1).
- In [iii], the content clauses are **internal complements**, licensed by the preceding verb (internal because they're located within the VP, as opposed to the subject, which is external to the VP). In [a] the content clause is the sole complement of *realize*; in [b] it's the second internal complement of *inform*; and in [c] it's the complement of *be* in its specifying sense.
- In [iv], the content clause is a complement in the NP headed by *fact*, and in [v] it is a complement in the AdjP headed by *glad*.
- Finally, in [vi], the content clause is complement in the PP headed by *provided*. As noted above, most prepositions disallow *that*; *provided* (historically derived from the past participle of a verb) is one of the few that allow it.

In traditional grammar the clauses that function as complements are called 'noun clauses', a hopelessly misleading term. Content clauses aren't anything like nouns. That should be completely clear from the examples in [5]: nouns and NPs don't function as extraposed subjects, or as complements in an NP or an AdjP. Some verbs take an NP object or a content clause as alternatives, but others only take content clauses. For example, *realize* licenses a content clause in [5iia] and an NP in *I realize the significance of what you're doing* (where the NP is a direct object); yet *complain* takes a content clause (*They complained that there was no hot water*) but doesn't allow an NP (**They complained the lack of hot water*). We don't make any functional distinction between content clauses that could be replaced by an NP and those that can't be.

11.3.3 The Mandative Construction

One type of declarative content clause that cannot be a main clause is the **mandative** (this term is based on the element *-mand-* that you see in *demand*, *command*, *mandate*, and *mandatory*). The verb *demand* and the adjective *mandatory* are both lexemes which license mandative complements, as in *They demand that the decision be reversed* (where the underlined clause is an internal complement of the verb) and *It is mandatory that he comply with the law* (where the underlined clause is the extraposed subject of the matrix clause).

The meaning of mandatives includes a component similar to that expressed by the modal auxiliary *must* (see §3.7.1 on **deontic modality**). The sentences in [6], which are all similar in meaning to *They must be told immediately*, illustrate three subtypes of mandative content clauses:

- [6] i SUBJUNCTIVE MANDATIVE *It is essential that they be told immediately.*
 ii *Should* MANDATIVE *It is essential that they should be told immediately.*
 iii TENSED MANDATIVE *It is essential that they are told immediately.*

- Variant [i] involves the **subjunctive** use of the **plain form** of the verb *be*. When the subject is 3rd person singular and/or the verb is *be* this construction is clearly distinct from non-mandative content clauses (*that they be told* vs *that they are told*). The ability to occur with such a complement provides a test to determine which lexemes license a mandative complement.
- In [ii], we have a special use of the modal preterite form *should* (one that is more common in BrE than in AmE).
- The tensed variant in [iii] has a non-modal tensed verb – in [iii], the verb is *be* in the present tense. Nothing in the form of the content clause itself distinguishes the mandative clause from an ordinary non-mandative declarative, such as the underlined subordinate clause in *I hope that they are told immediately*. The latter is clearly non-mandative, since *hope* – unlike *essential* – does not license a subjunctive complement. (Again, this variant of the mandative construction is more common in BrE than in AmE.)

With verbs other than *be*, and with subjects other than 3rd person singulars, the subjunctive and the tensed mandative have exactly the same form: *It is essential that we tell them immediately*. Here *tell* could be a plain form, the content clause therefore being the subjunctive kind of mandative, or it could be a plain present tense form, with the content clause being the tensed kind of mandative. There is of course no difference in meaning.

Potential Ambiguity

Content clause complements licensed by verbs like *demand*, adjectives like *essential*, *mandatory*, or *vital*, and so on, are always mandative. But there are some lexemes such as the verb *insist* and the adjective *important* that license both mandative and non-mandative complements, which permits ambiguities that bring out the difference in meaning between the two constructions. These two examples contrast sharply:

- [7] i *We insisted that she take it seriously.* [not ambiguous: subjunctive mandative]
 ii *We insisted that she took it seriously.* [either non-mandative or tensed mandative]

- Example [i] has a 3rd person singular subject, so *take* must be a plain form – not a present tense form (that would have to be *takes*). It follows that the subordinate clause must be subjunctive, and hence unambiguously mandative. The matrix clause carries the deontic meaning “We required her to take the matter seriously”.
- By contrast, example [ii], containing the preterite form *took*, is ambiguous for many speakers. The content clause can be understood as either a tensed

mandative or a non-mandative. In the former case, the meaning of the matrix clause is the same as that of [i], “We required her to take the matter seriously”; in the latter (which is more probable) it is “He emphatically asserted that she took the matter seriously”.

The same sort of ambiguity is found with *important*: a doctor who says *It’s important that he drinks a lot* might mean either “It’s important for him to drink a lot” (the mandative interpretation) or “The fact that he drinks a lot is important” (non-mandative).

11.4 Interrogative Content Clauses

Main clause interrogatives are characteristically used to ask questions; subordinate interrogatives express questions but can’t be used to ask them. Usually (but not always) the construction can be glossed with the formula “the answer to the question”:

- [8] i *I know where he is.* “I know the answer to the question ‘Where is he?’”
 ii *I told her what it was.* “I told her the answer to the question ‘What was it?’”

11.4.1 Closed Interrogatives: *Whether* and *If*

Main clause closed interrogatives are marked by subject–auxiliary inversion, but their subordinate counterparts generally have the usual subject–predicate order and are normally introduced by either one of the **interrogative subordinators**, *whether* and *if* (remember, the interrogative subordinator *if* is a different item from the conditional preposition *if*; see §7.2.1).

- | | | |
|-----|--|--|
| [9] | MAIN | SUBORDINATE |
| | i a. <i>Did he accept the offer?</i> | b. <i>I’m unsure <u>whether he accepted the offer</u>.</i> |
| | ii a. <i>Will you chair the meeting?</i> | b. <i>She asked me <u>if I’d chair the meeting</u>.</i> |

In [ia] we have an independent closed interrogative clause, so it has to begin with an auxiliary, which means the dummy auxiliary *do* is needed; but the subordinate version [ib] has the usual subject–predicate order, so we don’t need any *do*. The two subordinators could be switched: the meanings would be exactly the same.

11.4.2 Open Interrogatives

Open interrogatives, whether main or subordinate, are marked by the presence of an **interrogative phrase** containing one of the **interrogative words** *who*, *what*, *which*, etc. In main clauses the interrogative phrase usually occupies initial position, and, if it is not the subject, its placement in this position means an auxiliary has to

come next. In subordinate clauses, on the other hand, although the interrogative phrase is initial, there is normally no subject–auxiliary inversion:

- | | | |
|------|--|---|
| [10] | MAIN | SUBORDINATE |
| | i a. <i>Which candidate spoke first?</i> | b. <i>I can't say <u>which candidate spoke first</u>.</i> |
| | ii a. <i>Why did she resign?</i> | b. <i>It's obvious <u>why she resigned</u>.</i> |

Contrasts of this sort are the norm and are found in most Standard English speech and writing. However, in speech, and in casual writing like emails, subject–auxiliary inversion is often found in content clauses. We find *People are asking can they change their shifts* (instead of *People are asking whether they can change their shifts*); *Ask him would he mind waiting* (instead of *Ask him if he would mind waiting*); *It's a question of how do you control space* (instead of *It's a question of how you control space*); *It's about who do you trust* (instead of *It's about who you trust*); and so on.

It's not clear whether we should regard these as fully standard, but they're real examples we observed, and they sound natural to many Standard English speakers. They represent usage variation, not accidental mistakes, and they may indicate an incipient syntactic change. (By the way, you may remember that in §5.8.2, we quoted Lewis Carroll using *it* to refer to a baby: *The baby grunted again, and Alice looked very anxiously into its face to see what was the matter with it*. That sentence has an auxiliary before the subject in a content clause: *to see what was the matter with it*. So the variation goes back at least to 1865!)

11.4.3 Interrogatives as Complement

Like declaratives, interrogative content clauses – both open and closed – usually function as complements, as illustrated in [11]:

- | | | |
|------|---------------------------------|---|
| [11] | i SUBJECT | <i><u>What caused the delay</u> remains unclear.</i> |
| | ii EXTRAPOSED SUBJECT | <i>It remains unclear <u>what caused the delay</u>.</i> |
| | iii INTERNAL COMPLEMENT OF VERB | a. <i>I've discovered <u>where they keep the key</u>.</i>
b. <i>I asked them <u>what progress they had made</u>.</i>
c. <i>The only issue is <u>whether he was lying</u>.</i> |
| | iv COMPLEMENT OF NOUN | <i>The question <u>whether it's legal</u> was ignored.</i> |
| | v COMPLEMENT OF ADJECTIVE | <i>I'm not sure <u>what we can do about it</u>.</i> |
| | vi COMPLEMENT OF PREPOSITION | <i>That depends on <u>how much time we have</u>.</i> |

The range of functions is almost like that illustrated for declaratives in [5]. One difference from declaratives, however, is that prepositions are often optional; for example, we could add *of* after *question* in [iv], and we could omit *on* in [vi].

There is only partial overlap between the items that license declaratives and those that license interrogatives.

- **Know** accepts both declaratives and interrogatives: *I know it is genuine*; *We know what you did*.
- **Insist** accepts only declaratives: *I insist that it is genuine*; **We insist what you did*.
- **Inquire** accepts only interrogatives: **I inquired that it was genuine*; *We inquired what you did*.

Very few prepositions license declaratives, but there are plenty that accept interrogatives (like *on* in [vi]).

11.4.4 Interrogatives as Adjunct

There is one construction where subordinate interrogative clauses appear as supplements – i.e., as adjuncts rather than complements:

- [12] i CLOSED *He'll complain, whether we meet during the week or at the weekend.*
 ii OPEN *He'll mess things up, whatever you ask him to do.*

- It follows from [i] that he'll complain if we meet during the week, but he'll also complain if we meet at the weekend, and these two conditions exhaust the options, so it really doesn't matter what the answer is to the question of whether we meet during the week or not: we know he'll whine about it.
- Similarly, in [ii], if you ask him to peel the potatoes he'll mess it up, if you ask him to set the table he'll do it wrong, and so on indefinitely – for every possible X, if you ask him to do X, he'll mess things up; so he is guaranteed to mess things up, no matter what you ask of him.

We call this the **exhaustive conditional construction**. It uses an interrogative clause to express a set of conditions that exhaustively cover the possibilities. For a fuller discussion, see §8.8.

11.5 Exclamative Content Clauses

It is possible for an **exclamative** clause to be subordinated as a content clause, but since they differ from interrogatives in not having subject–auxiliary inversion in main clauses, for the most part (setting aside some variation between speakers on this point) there is no internal difference between subordinate and main clause exclamatives:

- [13] MAIN SUBORDINATE
- i a. *How lucky you are!* b. *I told them how lucky you are.*
- ii a. *What a mess it was!* b. *I remember what a mess it was.*

We can argue by elimination that the complement clauses here are exclamatives: their initial *wh* phrases show that they are not declarative, and they cannot be

interrogative either because the ones with *what* are incompatible with matrix verbs that select interrogatives (**I inquired what a mess it was*).

11.5.1 Subordinate Exclamatives Are Always Complements

Exclamative content clauses function exclusively as internal or external complements, never as adjuncts. They occur with much the same range of complement functions as other content clauses, though they are licensed by a far smaller set of lexemes. Examples are given in [14]:

[14]	i	SUBJECT	<i>What a bargain it was</i> hadn't yet struck me.
	ii	EXTRAPOSED SUBJECT	<i>It's incredible</i> <u>how much he wanted to charge</u> .
	iii	INTERNAL COMPLEMENT OF VERB	<i>I'd forgotten</i> <u>what a fine speaker she is</u> .
	iv	COMPLEMENT OF PREPOSITION	<i>She was surprised at</i> <u>how pale he looked</u> .
	v	COMPLEMENT OF ADJECTIVE	<i>She was surprised</i> <u>how pale he looked</u> .

Exercises on Chapter 11

1. In each of the following pairs, embed a **subordinate** counterpart of the main clause [a] in the position marked '[...]' in [b], and identify the clause type and function of the subordinate clause.

Example:

- a. *How does it work?*
 - b. *I don't know [how it works].* (open interrogative content clause)
- i a. *Why did she resign?*
 - b. *It's not clear to me [...].*
- ii a. *It was a hoax.*
 - b. *Few people believe the rumour [...].*
- iii a. *Is it a serious threat?*
 - b. *[...] remains to be seen.*
- iv a. *Who originated the idea?*
 - b. *No one knows [...].*
- v a. *They moved to Boston.*
 - b. *I met them several times before [...].*
- vi a. *What a bargain it was!*
 - b. *She told me [...].*
- vii a. *You will get your money back.*
 - b. *I'm determined [...].*

- viii a. *Can we rely on them?*
b. *I'm not certain [...].*
 - ix a. *It was a serious mistake.*
b. *[...] is now indisputable.*
 - x a. *Do you have any idea how much it cost?*
b. *I'm not sure [...].*
 - xi a. *Can we finish before the year is out?*
b. *[...], we don't know yet.*
 - xii a. *Is it going to be carried out or not?*
b. *[...] is not yet known.*
 - xiii a. *You need to calm someone down.*
b. *Keep herbal remedies handy in the event [...].*
 - xiv a. *Both men died, and Lazarus was carried away to heaven.*
b. *It came about [...].*
 - xv a. *People think it's all just a matter of opinion and preference.*
b. *The problem becomes [...].*
 - xvi a. *The vast majority of programmers have been boneheads for forty years.*
b. *'Lisp is an excellent choice' is a more believable statement than [...].*
 - xvii a. *It wasn't just manufacturing.*
b. *Then the reality sank in [...].*
 - xviii a. *They must not be displaced by rising rents and a bad economy.*
b. *He was particularly concerned [...].*
 - xix a. *For Dante, the entrance into hell marks the beginning of hope.*
b. *It is also true [...].*
 - xx a. *She summarized a 400-page report in 48 hours.*
b. *Some people have been concerned [...].*
2. For each of the lexemes in the list on the next page, say whether or not it can license the following types of content clause complement: (a) **mandative**; (b) **other declarative**; (c) **closed interrogative**; (d) **open interrogative**; (e) **exclamative**. (Note that closed interrogatives sometimes occur more readily in non-affirmative than in affirmative contexts: before giving a 'no' answer for (c), therefore, test with a negative matrix clause as well as a positive one.) Give an example to support each 'yes' answer.

- i *advise*
- ii *ask*
- iii *convince*
- iv *doubt* [verb]
- v *forget*
- vi *idea*
- vii *inquire*
- viii *learn*
- ix *realize*
- x *sense* [verb]

3. Here is another selection of complement-taking lexemes; the instructions are the same as for the previous exercise, except that, for the two adjectives, the issue is whether they license the various kinds of content clause as a subject (or as an extraposed subject).

- i *amazing*
- ii *belief*
- iii *decision*
- iv *feel*
- v *grasp* [verb]
- vi *important*
- vii *know*
- viii *question* [noun]
- ix *require*
- x *wonder* [verb]

4. For each of the underlined content clauses below say whether it is (a) an **open interrogative**; or (b) an **exclamative**; or (c) **ambiguous** between open interrogative and exclamative. If your answer is (a) or (b), explain what grammatical factors make the clause unambiguous. If your answer is (c), comment on the difference in meaning.

- i *She didn't know how valuable it was.*
- ii *I'd forgotten what a difficult route it was.*
- iii *He asked how old I was.*
- iv *That depends on how much we have to pay.*
- v *You won't believe who they're planning to appoint.*

5. Which of the following prepositions license a **declarative content clause** as complement? For each one that does, give an example and say whether or not the subordinator *that* is permitted in the content clause.

- i *above*
- ii *as*
- iii *because*

- iv *despite*
- v *for*
- vi *in*
- vii *on*
- viii *though*
- ix *unless*
- x *with*

6. Here's another selection of prepositions; some license a declarative content clause complement and some don't. The instructions are the same as for the previous exercise.

- i *after*
- ii *at*
- iii *by*
- iv *during*
- v *given*
- vi *notwithstanding*
- vii *since*
- viii *through*
- ix *until*
- x *without*

7. Which of the constituents beginning with *if* is a PP, and which is a content clause? Say what the answer is for each one, and briefly explain your evidence.

- i *How about if I give you a few days and then I call you?*
- ii *If you don't mind, can I ask what you're looking at?*
- iii *I'll check the onboard logs. They'll show if the cannon was fired.*
- iv *I'm not so sure if it's a better plan to fight him on our turf or his.*
- v *I'm not sure, if you're on board, why you're not more helpful.*
- vi *It's beginning to show if you know what I mean.*
- vii *The term doesn't signify if the route cause is inflammatory or genetic.*
- viii *They carry it delicately, as if it were a fine piece of furniture.*
- ix *They simply believed in the idea that even if you don't start out with much, then you should be able to build a decent life.*
- x *What's the point of having a TV show if you can't meet your heroes?*

8. Identify the matrix clause for each underlined clause in the following excerpt (from a news article by Afua Hirsch headlined "In the UK, White Immigration Is an Asset – While Everyone Else Is Undesirable").

I'm not an immigrant but I have always been seen as one. The response to any perceived transgression I make towards a public person or policy is frequently: "If you don't like it here, then leave." White immigrants, and especially those from western Europe, had on the whole never before felt as if this prejudice applied to them, because "immigration" – as a contentious political issue – has never been about people coming from other

countries, and it's never been about the movement required to get here. "Immigration" has always been a byword for the problem of people who are racialised as undesirable, whether they were born here or not.

The hypocrisy is embedded in the history. I often wonder how it was that the arrival of the SS Windrush in 1948, carrying fewer than 500 West Indians specifically invited to come and work in the UK, was and remains such a symbol of profound soul searching for the national identity. That event stands in stark contrast to the more than 200,000 eastern Europeans and 100,000 Irish immigrants who came to Britain during the same period. The former is regarded as a turning point in the fabric of the nation's identity, the latter is barely remembered at all. But this illogicality in our narratives around immigration is not confined to the past. I have spent most of my life living in leafy southwest London, an area often described as "quintessentially English", helped by the presence of rowing on the Thames at Putney and Hammersmith, lawn tennis at Wimbledon, botanical gardens at Kew and Henry VIII's old hunting grounds in the deer-populated Richmond Park. These areas are still perceived as unchanged by mass immigration.

9. [Supplementary exercise] When it comes to subordinate clauses, does it make sense to talk about what kind of speech act they are used to perform? Explain your reasoning.
10. [Supplementary exercise] Many grammars use the term 'noun clause' for what we call 'content clauses'. The idea is supposed to be that they have the same function as NPs. Answer the following questions about that idea:
 - i What functions are performed by both content clauses and NPs, either in general or as complements of specific words?
 - ii What functions are performed by content clauses but not NPs?
 - iii What functions are performed by NPs but not content clauses?
 - iv In what ways apart from functions do NPs and content clauses differ?
11. [Supplementary exercise] Many grammars talk about interrogative content clauses as 'embedded questions'. Why might this term be misleading? Present examples as necessary to support what you say.
12. [Supplementary exercise] Which type of the five major types of content clause is most complex? Justify your position.
13. Replace the underlined clause with a constituent from a different category where possible. Change the meaning as little as possible.

Example: I expect that it will change. I expect a change/something different.

- i I agree that it is cheating to use applications to do bird watching.
- ii They made a serious mistake in trying to enter South Ossetia with force.
- iii I've used lard a lot and I think that it depends on the type of crust you want.
- iv Tracy says that many children who grow up in expatriate families get the travel bug.

- v *I also wonder whether I'm more into high proof whiskey than you are.*
 - vi *We tucked him into bed and told him what a winner he is.*
 - vii *George met the elf again and told him what had happened.*
 - viii *That it's in this condition suggests something about Mitchell's perfectionist nature.*
 - ix *I wrote the article before we started dating.*
 - x *It didn't surprise me that it was 5:56.*
14. [Supplementary exercise] Is it possible to construct a content clause subject that triggers plural agreement?

12

Relative Constructions

A **relative clause** is a subordinate clause with an **anaphoric** relationship to a **matrix** clause. The primary function of a relative clause – as we saw in [Chapter 5](#) – is as a modifier of a nominal within an NP. This chapter first looks at relative clauses in this typical function and then extends the description to cover less prototypical relative constructions.

12.1 Relative Clauses as Modifiers in Nominals

Examples of relative clauses functioning as modifier in the nominal part of an NP are given in [\[1\]](#), where the nominal is in brackets (recall that the nominal is basically the NP minus the determiner) and the relative clause within it is underlined:

- [1] i *The secretary wrote to all the [members who were absent from the meeting].*
 ii *The [video that I needed] is unobtainable.*

- In [i], the relative clause who were absent from the meeting is a modifier in the nominal headed by *members*, namely *members who were absent from the meeting*.
- Similarly in [ii], the relative clause is a modifier in the nominal headed by *video*, and the head nominal is determined by *the*.

Because relative clauses semantically provide extra descriptive content mainly applied to nouns, traditional grammar called them ‘adjective clauses’ – a very bad idea, because relative clauses have dramatically different properties from adjectives. Relative clauses come **AFTER** the noun rather than before it like adjectives; compare *the candidate who was successful* with *the successful candidate*. (It isn’t even true that what’s modified by a relative clause is always a noun or nominal, by the way: it’s true in the examples we’re dealing with in this section, but we’ll consider other cases in [§12.2.3](#).)

The relative clause in [\[1i\]](#) is introduced by the **relative pronoun** *who*, which is one of a small set of words called **relative words**. The interpretation of *who* is provided by its **antecedent**, the noun *members*. A pronoun and its antecedent are related by

the purely semantic relation of anaphora (see §5.8.1), and it is a crucial property of relative clauses that they always contain an element – actually present or merely understood – that is **anaphorically related** to some antecedent making the same reference.

In many cases the meaning of a relative clause can be roughly paraphrased by putting an ordinary personal pronoun into it – not necessarily where the relative word *who* or *which* appears, but where it would normally make the right kind of meaning contribution:

- The relative clause in [1i] means roughly “they were absent from the meeting”. “They” has *members* as antecedent, so the NP headed by the bracketed nominal refers to all the members for whom “they were absent from the meeting” is true. But it’s a syntactic requirement of the relative clause construction that *who* is used rather than *they*.
- In [1ii] there is no relative word: *that* is a **subordinator** in **marker** function. Nonetheless, the relative clause is understood as if there were a pronoun serving as the object of the VP with *needed* as its head. The relative clause means “I needed it”. The antecedent of the “it” part is the noun *video*, so the bracketed NP refers to the video for which “I needed it” is true.

Relative clauses with *that* are crucially distinct from content clauses with *that*, as illustrated in [2]:

- [2] i RELATIVE CLAUSE *The court rejected the suggestion that the witness made ____.*
 ii CONTENT CLAUSE *The court rejected the suggestion that the witness lied.*

We use the notation ‘____’ in [2] (and below) as just an informal indication of the covert object, which is there in the meaning but not in the pronunciation or the spelling.

- In [i] we have a relative clause *that the witness made*, roughly meaning “the witness made it”, with *suggestion* as the antecedent of “it”, so we understand that the witness suggested something (we don’t know the content), and the court rejected it.
- In [ii], however, there is no element in the subordinate clause anaphorically linked to the head noun *suggestion*. (**The witness lied it* is ungrammatical; an object wouldn’t even be allowed here.) The underlined subordinate clause is NOT a relative clause; it’s a content clause expressing the content of the suggestion: someone (we aren’t told who) has suggested that the witness was a liar, and the court didn’t agree.
- Another important functional distinction between the two constructions is that the content clause in [2ii] is a **complement** and, as such, needs to be licensed. Complements of this sort are licensed by only a few nouns, such as *belief*, *fact*,

idea, thought, realization, suggestion, etc. We couldn't replace the relative clauses in [1] by content clauses, because *member* and *video* don't license content-clause complements. The relative clause in [2ii] is a **modifier**, not a complement, so it doesn't have to be licensed by anything.

12.1.1 *Wh* and Non-*Wh* Relative Clauses

Although it is an essential feature of the modifying relative clause that it must contain an anaphoric link to the head noun, there doesn't have to be a relative word to express that link. We already saw that in [1ii].

The relative clauses that do contain an overt anaphorically linked element like *who* or *which* are often called ***wh* relatives**, on the basis of the spelling of the anaphoric items in English. The ones that don't, the **non-*wh* relatives**, are of two subtypes: ***that* relatives**, which begin with the clause subordinator *that* (as in [1ii] and [2i]) and **bare relatives**, which don't. The picture so far is like this:

- | | | | | | |
|-----|-----|---------------------|---|--|---|
| [3] | i | <i>wh</i> TYPE | | <i>The video [which I needed __] is not available.</i> | |
| | ii | | { | <i>that</i> RELATIVE | <i>The video [that I needed __] is not available.</i> |
| | iii | NON- <i>wh</i> TYPE | | BARE RELATIVE | <i>The video [I needed __] is not available.</i> |

Traditional grammars virtually always treat the word *that* as a relative pronoun when it introduces a relative clause, as if it were like *which* or *who*. But it's not. It's a subordinator in marker function, the same one found in content clauses. The primary evidence for this is that it is required to be right at the beginning of the clause, just like the subordinator *that* introducing the content clause in [2ii]. This restriction doesn't apply to relative pronouns: in formal style they can have prepositions preceding them. Compare *the video [to which I referred]* (where the pronoun *which* is not at the beginning of the relative clause) with **the video [to that I referred]*, which is ungrammatical.

(There's a special type of relative clause illustrated by *It isn't often [that she loses her temper]* or *It is with great pleasure [that I declare this exhibition open]*, where the idea of *that* being a pronoun makes no sense at all. But we'll talk about that type later, in §16.5.)

In [3] there is no relative pronoun in [ii] or [iii], but there is still an anaphoric relation to the head noun *book*. The relative clauses can be thought of as meaning "I needed it", with "it" functioning as the object and interpreted as some specific video. Evidence that *needed* in [ii–iii] has a covert object is provided by a very simple fact: although *need* is transitive, hence has to have an object in canonical clauses, here it not only doesn't have one, but isn't allowed to have one:

- [4] **The video that I needed the director's permission was not available.*

Here the NP *the director's permission* has been added as a direct object (and it's an entirely appropriate one: *I needed the director's permission* is fully grammatical as a main clause, and it makes sense that you might need a video to be available and also need permission to use it). But this addition of an object to [3ii] makes the sentence ungrammatical. Why? It's because *needed* has already got a direct object; it just isn't an overt one.

12.1.2 The Relativized Element

The part of a modifying relative clause that is anaphorically linked to the head noun is called the **relativized element**. It is overt in *wh* relatives, but in non-*wh* relatives it amounts simply to an absence – a location in the clause where there could have been some phrase but it's missing. The relativized element can have a range of functions within the relative clause, as illustrated in [5] (we exemplify with *wh* relatives because with those the relativized element is overt):

- | | | | |
|-----|-----|-------------------|---|
| [5] | i | SUBJECT | <i>the lawyer [who defended her]</i> |
| | ii | OBJECT | <i>a key [which she found __]</i> |
| | iii | OBJECT IN A PP | <i>the book [which I was referring to __]</i> |
| | iv | ADJUNCT OF TIME | <i>the day [when he was born __]</i> |
| | v | ADJUNCT OF PLACE | <i>a place [where you can relax __]</i> |
| | vi | ADJUNCT OF REASON | <i>the reason [why she got angry __]</i> |

Notice the relative words of different lexical categories that are used here: pronouns *who* and *which* for people and things respectively; prepositions *when* and *where* for adjuncts of time and place respectively; and adverb *why* for adjuncts of reason. Determinatives *which* and *what* are also possible (see §12.2.3). (*How* is not a possible relative word in Standard English relative clauses: **That's the way how you do it.*)

The selection of *where* and *when* is syntactic, not just semantic. *I lived there* is grammatical but **I found there* is not, so we get *the house where I lived* but not **the house where I found*: a PP cannot function as the object of a *found* VP, so we get *the house that I found* instead.

In these *wh*-relative examples the *wh* element occupies initial position in the relative clause. In the case of the subject, this is where you would expect it anyway, but in the case of non-subjects, it is not the position that the function in question would occupy in a main clause: in all of [ii–vi] the basic position is at the end (*She found a key*; *I was referring to that book*; and so on). In these constructions the **relativized element** is **fronted**, just like the interrogative element in open interrogative clauses (*What had she found?*, etc.; see §11.4.2).

There are non-*wh* counterparts of the *wh* relatives in [5]. Again, we'll use the notation '___' as an informal mark of the position for the relativized element. From

now on we'll call that structural position the *gap*. In these examples the gap does not correspond to anything written or pronounced anywhere in the sentence, not even a fronted *wh* word:

- | | | | |
|-----|-----|-------------------|--|
| [6] | i | SUBJECT | <i>the lawyer [that __ defended her]</i> |
| | ii | OBJECT | <i>a key [(that) she found __]</i> |
| | iii | OBJECT IN PP | <i>the book [(that) I was referring to __]</i> |
| | iv | ADJUNCT OF TIME | <i>the day[(that) he was born __]</i> |
| | v | ADJUNCT OF PLACE | ⁹⁰ <i>a place [(that) you can relax __]</i> |
| | vi | ADJUNCT OF REASON | <i>the reason [(that) she got angry __]</i> |

- The parentheses around *that* in all cases except [i] indicate its optionality: in cases like [ii–vi] both *that* relatives and bare relatives are permitted.
- Where the gap corresponds to the subject of the relative clause, as in [i], *that* is not omissible in Standard English. Sentences like ¹*Anyone wants this stuff can have it* do occur in some English dialects (you will find them in quoted dialect in novels), but not in the dialects we're describing. In Standard English, *The lawyer that defended her was incompetent* is clearly grammatical and **The lawyer defended her was incompetent* is clearly not. (This restriction may be due to the way it prevents the modified NP from being misinterpreted as the subject of the verb heading the relative clause: if *the lawyer defended her* were a grammatical NP it could be interpreted as a main clause instead, but if *that* is obligatory before a subject relativized element, no ambiguity arises. There's no ambiguity in *the lawyer defending her*, of course, because *defending* doesn't look like a tensed main clause verb.)
- There are considerable limitations on the use of the non-*wh* construction when the relativized element is an adjunct (or complement) of place. First, the antecedent is normally a noun of very general meaning like *place* itself, as in [v]; with head nouns that are less likely to suggest location, a relative preposition would normally be required. We get *Find the web page where the claim was first made*, not **Find the web page (that) the claim was first made*. Second, there is variation among speakers: not everyone accepts example [v]; it's more common in AmE than in BrE. Third, the bare version is widely preferred over the one with *that*.

12.1.3 Relativized Element within an Embedded Clause

It is possible for the RELATIVIZED element to be located within a content clause that is itself embedded inside the relative clause:

- | | | | | | |
|-----|----|----|--|----|---|
| [7] | i | a. | <i>a letter [which he says [she wrote __]]</i> | b. | <i>a letter [(that) he says [she wrote __]]</i> |
| | ii | a. | <i>a boy [who we think [__ was with her]]</i> | b. | <i>a boy [(that) we think [__ was with her]]</i> |

- In [i], THE RELATIVIZED ELEMENT is the gap that appears instead of the object of the *wrote* VP, and the *wrote* clause is a content clause functioning as the complement of the *says* VP: the relative clause means “He says she wrote it”. We understand that he says she wrote some letter, and the letter is the one of which “He says she wrote it” is true.
- Example [ii] shows a RELATIVIZED-ELEMENT gap in the subject of a COMPLEMENT CLAUSE. We said above that bare relative clauses are impossible in Standard English with a subject gap, and [ii] shows that this limitation applies strictly to the RELATIVE-CLAUSE SUBJECT, not to complement-clause subjects, even when they are inside a relative construction. Here, what’s missing is the SUBJECT OF THE EMBEDDED CONTENT CLAUSE: “He thinks was with her”. But it differs from [6i] above, for we saw that in that example the subordinator *that* is obligatory whereas in [7iib] it is omissible. So, the rule banning the omission of *that* applies when the relativized element is subject of the relative clause itself, but not when it’s the subject of an embedded clause. In [6i], *that* prevents the verb being initial in the clause and hence potentially misinterpreted as the main clause verb. In [7iib] things are different: the verb *think* is preceded by its subject *we*, so omission of *that* couldn’t lead to a similar misinterpretation.

12.1.4 The Relative Phrase

Now we turn to a more complex kind of relative construction found only in the *wh* type. It is illustrated in [8]:

- [8]
- i She hasn’t yet contacted the people [whose house she wants to rent].
 - ii This is the article [from which I was quoting].
 - iii He set them a problem, [the answer to which they found online].

The underlined expressions here contain not just the relative pronouns *whose* and *which*, but other material as well. We need therefore to distinguish between the **relativized element** (the element that is anaphorically related to the head nominal) and the **relative phrase** (the constituent that takes initial position in the clause, which we’ve underlined).

In earlier examples such as *the lawyer [who defended her]*, the relative phrase consists solely of the relativized element (i.e., *who*), but in [8] this is not so: the relative phrase is the one marked by underlining (and linked by a line to the gap); the relativized element is just *whose* or *which* (which we show as linked by a line to

the head noun). It is just the relativized element, not the whole relative phrase, that is anaphorically related to the head nouns *people*, *article*, and *problem*.

- In [i] the relative phrase is the NP *whose house*. We understand it as the object of the *rent* VP. But it's not *whose house* that has *people* as its antecedent, it's just *whose*. We can represent the meaning of the clause as “she wants to rent their house”, with “their” anaphorically related to *people*. Certain people own a house, and she wants to rent that house, but she hasn't yet contacted those people.
- Similarly, in [ii] (which is rather formal in style), the relative phrase is the PP *from which*, but the head noun *article* is the antecedent just for the pronoun *which*, so this is the relativized element. The meaning incorporates “I was quoting from it” – that is, I was quoting from some article, and this is it.
- In [iii] the relative phrase is even larger: *the answer to which*. It's understood as if it were the object of the *found* VP, but again only *which* is anaphorically related to the head noun *problem*. So, we have a relative clause meaning “they found the answer to it online”: he set them a certain problem, and “they found the answer to it online” is true of that problem.

For [8ii–iii], but not for [8i], there are other versions in which less material is fronted, so that the relative phrase is a smaller constituent:

- [9] i **She hasn't been able to contact the people whose she's renting __ house*.
 ii *This is the article which they were quoting from __*.
 iii *He set us a problem to which we found the answer __ online*.

- Example [i] is ungrammatical because *whose* requires that we front the whole of the NP in which it functions as the determiner: the generalization here is that English DOESN'T ALLOW FRONTING A DETERMINER by separating it from its NP.
- In [9ii] the preposition *from* is stranded, instead of being fronted along with its complement as in [8ii] (recall the detailed discussion of the difference between preposition fronting and preposition stranding in [Chapter 7](#).)
- In [9iii] the relative phrase is just the PP *to which*, not the NP *the answer to which*, as in [8iii]: the PP is fronted from its basic position as a complement within the object NP.

12.2 Integrated versus Supplementary Relatives

The relative clauses considered so far have all been **integrated** into the structure of the NP containing them as modifiers. As such, they contrast with another kind of relative clause that, intuitively, is more loosely attached. We call these **supplementary** relative clauses, because they function as supplements in the sense of [§8.11](#).

The two examples in [10], which are dramatically different in meaning, illustrate the contrast:

- [10] i INTEGRATED *Politicians who make extravagant promises aren't trusted.*
 ii SUPPLEMENTARY *Politicians, who make extravagant promises, aren't trusted.*

In the following three subsections we look in detail at the differences between integrated and supplementary relatives with respect to three properties: intonation and punctuation; semantic interpretation; and syntax.

12.2.1 Intonation and Punctuation

Integrated relatives are integrated intonationally into the larger construction; there isn't a pause or a start of a new phonological phrase between a head noun and an integrated relative clause. But supplementary relative clauses are, just like other supplements, set apart in pronunciation. They are spoken as separate intonational units: [10ii] is pronounced with a slight pause after *politicians* and another before the verb *aren't*.

In writing, this difference is reflected in the punctuation. Supplementary relatives are generally marked off by commas, dashes, or parentheses, as seen in [10ii]. But punctuation does not provide quite as reliable a criterion as intonation: you will occasionally find relatives in written English which on other grounds clearly have to be supplementary, but which are not being set apart by punctuation.

12.2.2 Interpretation

The terms we use for the two types of relative clause directly reflect the difference in meaning as well as difference of syntax.

- The information expressed in an integrated relative is presented as an integral part of the larger message. If you leave out an integrated relative, it can change a true statement to a false one or vice versa.
- The information expressed in a supplementary relative is presented as a peripheral addition to what the rest of the sentence says. It represents either an interruption (if it's somewhere in the middle of the sentence) or an after-thought (if it's at the end).

The examples in [10] illustrate an important special case of this difference.

- In [i], the relative clause functions as modifier and serves to restrict the **denotation** of the head noun *politicians* (i.e., the set of people to whom the term applies): the sentence doesn't claim that no politicians are trusted; it's only the ones who make extravagant promises. The information given in the relative clause is an integral part of the larger message: it plays an essential role in defining who is being said to lack public trust, in the same way that a modifier like *dishonest* would.

- In [ii], by contrast, the property of not being trusted is attributed to politicians in general, not just to some of them. Instead of picking out a subset of politicians, it makes the claim that none of them are trusted. But it also adds an extra comment about what politicians are like: they make extravagant promises.

On the basis of this kind of semantic contrast, integrated relative clauses are traditionally called ‘restrictive’ (or sometimes ‘defining’), and supplementary ones are called ‘non-restrictive’ (or ‘non-defining’). These terms suggest that integrated relatives are always restrictive, but that’s not true. An integrated relative doesn’t always pick out a subset of the set denoted by the head noun; it only does so in some cases, like the ones in [10]. Consider the difference between these two examples:

- [11] i *Martha has [two sons who are teenagers] and [two who have jobs].*
 ii *Martha will be all right; she has [two sons she can rely on].*

- In [i], the relative clauses certainly are semantically restrictive: they distinguish two subsets of sons (we might guess that Martha has at least four in all, though that’s not necessarily true because the subsets could overlap).
- In [ii], however, the relative clause does no restricting. There’s no implication that Martha has more than two sons. The information given in the relative clause does NOT distinguish these two reliable sons from any other sons that she might have. Yet it is presented as an integrated part of the larger message. A natural reason for presenting it as such is that it is essential to explaining WHY she will be all right. (Having two sons doesn’t necessarily mean a mother will be all right; but being able to rely on them probably does.)

Here’s an actual example of this sort from a Dick Francis novel, where the NP is definite and singular rather than indefinite and plural:

- [12] *[The father who had planned my life to the point of my unsought arrival in Brighton] took it for granted that in the last three weeks of his legal guardianship I would still act as he directed.*

Again, the underlined relative clause does not distinguish one father from another: the narrator here is talking about the only father he ever had. So, the information given in the relative clause is NOT SEMANTICALLY RESTRICTIVE. The reason for using an integrated relative is that it has crucial relevance to the rest of the message: it was precisely because the narrator’s father had planned his son’s life up to that point that he assumed he would be able to go on doing so.

Usage Controversy Note

Various grammarians from the mid-nineteenth century onward seem to have felt that English would be neater if supplementary relative clauses anchored to non-human head nouns ALWAYS began with *which*, and integrated relatives NEVER did. Integrated relatives (called ‘restrictive’ or ‘defining’ in traditional grammars) would be required to begin with *that* instead.

This reform never really caught on, but by the beginning of the twentieth century it was being promulgated enough to lead some grammarians and teachers – especially in America – to assume that it had succeeded. They started to assert that *which* in integrated relatives was a grammatical error.

We’ve ignored the reformers’ ideas in this chapter (we gave integrated relative examples with *which* in [3], [5], [7], and [9]). The evidence has always been massively against the reformers. Henry and Frank Fowler were advocates of the reform (in *The King’s English*, 1906), but they had to admit that there was no sign of most writers – or even the best writers – following their recommendation.

English writers have used integrated *which* down through the centuries. We find it in the 1611 King James Bible (*Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar’s*); we heard it in the phrase *a date which will live in infamy*, which figured in President Franklin D. Roosevelt’s famous speech after the 1941 Pearl Harbour attack. Even people who endorse the prohibition on ‘restrictive’ *which* turn out to occasionally violate it in their own writing.

A ban solely on *which* appearing in integrated relatives is oddly specific: *who*, *when*, *where*, and *why* all occur in integrated relatives as well as supplementary ones, as we saw in [5]. And the ban is not motivated by avoidance of ambiguity: supplementary relatives are standardly flanked by commas, parentheses, or intonational phrase breaks, and it is those that remove any ambiguity. Moreover, in some cases substituting *that* for *which* is impossible: the Fowlers accepted that *something on which we agree* is grammatical but **something on that we agree* is not.

Many style manuals and grammar checkers (like the one built into Microsoft Word) assume the supposed rule, and so do most American publishers and copy editors. They all ignore what the actual practice of educated writers tells us. Of course, anyone who likes the idea of never using *which* in an integrated relative can follow Fowler’s rule if they want to; but they would be wrong to regard other people’s use of integrated relative clauses with *which* as mistakes.

12.2.3 Syntax

In addition to what we have just set out concerning the phonological (or punctuation) and semantic facts about integrated and supplementary relatives, there are also a number of syntactic differences. We will mention four of them.

Supplementary Relatives Are Always *Wh* Relatives

Supplementary relatives are virtually always of the *wh* type, as the following examples indicate:

- [13] i *His father, whom she had never met, opposed the marriage.* [wh relative]
 ii **His father, she had never met, opposed the marriage.* [bare relative]
 iii **His father, that she had never met, opposed the marriage.* [that relative]

Bare relatives certainly can't be supplementary relatives, as [ii] shows, and although very occasionally sentences like [iii] may be found, they are very rare, and are best regarded as ungrammatical. Some of them are probably just editing errors.

The Antecedent Choices Are Different

Supplements, as we said in §8.11, are semantically associated with an **anchor**. In the case of supplementary relatives, this anchor is the antecedent of the relativized element. Supplementary relatives allow a wider range of antecedents than integrated relatives. Most importantly, they accept **clauses** and **proper nouns** without determiners, as in [14]:

- [14] i *Max arrived late, which caused some delay.*
 ii *Max, who was usually very punctual, was twenty minutes late.*

- In [i], the antecedent of *which* is the preceding clause. The relative clause means “it caused some delay”, and the “it” is interpreted as Max's arriving late.
- In [ii], the antecedent of *who* is *Max*: we understand that Max was usually very punctual. Proper nouns don't occur with integrated relatives (unless a determiner is used, as in *He's not [the Max I was referring to]*, and there the sense is different – *the Max* means something like “the instance of people called Max”).

Which + Nominal Occurs Solely in Supplementary Relatives

Whereas relative *which* occurs in both integrated and supplementary relatives (see the Usage Controversy Note above), *which* plus a head nominal occurs only in supplementary relatives. Here's an example:

- [15] *This will keep us busy until Friday, [by which time the boss will be back].*

Note that here the relative phrase is *by which time* and the relativized element is *which time* (not *which* alone). It is the phrase *which time* that derives its interpretation from the antecedent *Friday*.

There Are Differences in Function

Integrated relatives function as modifier within the nominal that is head of the NP. Two such nominals can be coordinated, as shown by the brackets in [16].

- [16] Any [[_{Nom} *pianist who sings*] or [_{Nom} *singer who plays piano*]]
 can always find work.

Supplementary relatives intuitively have a much looser connection to their anchors. They do not have to be attached within NPs, but may appear as supplements anchored to a whole clause, as in [14i] above. And in fact, a supplementary relative can have the syntactic status of an entirely separate sentence, as in this exchange between two speakers, A and B:

- [17] A: *Bob seems extremely keen to become chair of the finance committee.*
 B: *Which is exactly why we shouldn't select him.*

12.3 Integrated and Supplementary Relative Words

The relative words in the *wh* constructions discussed above are listed in [18]:

- [18] *who (who, whom, whose) which when where why*

When, *where*, and *why* are the relative words corresponding to dependents expressing temporal, location, and reason information, respectively, as illustrated in [5iv–vi]. But *who* and *which* are separated by a gender distinction.

12.3.1 Personal versus Non-Personal Gender

The word ‘gender’ in grammar is not always associated with sexual characteristics or identity. It’s a grammatical term with a broader sense relating to classifications of nouns into types. The primary gender system in English (discussed in §5.8.2, for the 3rd person singular personal pronouns) is based on a tripartite classification based on folk conceptions of sex, but there’s also a secondary gender system based on a different folk distinction: the one between persons and things. We mean ‘person’ in the philosophical sense, where a person is an entity for which certain ethical concerns are relevant. We’ll use the terms **personal** and **non-personal** for these two genders.

The personal-gender relative pronoun *who* is primarily used for human beings, non-human sentient entities like extra-terrestrials or highly intelligent robots in sci-fi, and some higher animals, especially pets. *Which* is used for other kinds of referent. The choice depends on the speaker’s judgment about attributing personhood.

English grammars invariably call *which* a relative pronoun, and for simplicity we have followed that tradition, but it might actually be better to treat relative *which* as a determinative that almost always occurs in determiner-head fusion. As noted

above, it functions as a determiner with a distinct head only in certain kinds of supplementary relative: *I may be late, in which case you should start without me*, or *I proposed an adjournment, which suggestion was eagerly accepted*. Usually, it occurs as an NP in its own right, sometimes the complement of a preposition (*a task for which I was paid a fee*), so traditional grammars call it a relative pronoun. But as a pronoun, it would be unusual in lacking a genitive form. Non-compound determinatives in fused determiner-head function, like *this* or *that*, don't take the *'s* suffix, so they can't be used as genitive determiners: **This's dustjacket is torn*. It's the same with *which*: **I'll take the one which's dustjacket is torn*. That's why *whose* is substituted: *I'll take the one whose dustjacket is torn*.

The personal/non-personal distinction applies to both interrogative and relative words, but in relatives the non-personal word is different from the interrogative one: it's *which* rather than *what*:

[19]		INTERROGATIVE	RELATIVE
i	PERSONAL	<u>Who</u> do you love most?	the person <u>who</u> I love most
ii	NON-PERSONAL	<u>What</u> do you love most?	the thing <u>which</u> I love most

A further small gender-related distinction between interrogative words and relative words is that interrogative *whose* is personal but relative *whose* is gender-neutral: we get both *the guy whose car was stolen* (personal) and *a book whose pages were falling out* (non-personal). With interrogatives, *whose* is always personal: you can't ask about a collection of old books, **Whose pages are falling out?*

A third such distinction is that interrogative *who* is syntactically singular, while relative *who* is neutral for agreement purposes; so **Who manage this place?* is ungrammatical (it's not a way of asking "Tell me the names of the managers") but *the people who manage this place* is grammatical.

Usage Controversy Note

Some usage advisers over the past century or two have suggested that the use of *that* is wrong for a noun of personal gender, i.e., for a human-denoting antecedent. This would make a phrase like *anybody that wants a ticket* ungrammatical. It is strange that such a belief could thrive when there is so much evidence against it. Writers have been using *that* relatives with personal antecedents throughout the whole of the history of English, and it is extremely easy to verify that from corpora. While *people who* is more frequent than *people that*, and by a slowly increasing margin, *people that* has nonetheless remained in use and shows no signs either of dying out or of taking over. The two are freely chosen variants, and neither is incorrect.

12.3.2 Case: Nominative versus Accusative

Who is a variable lexeme. In addition to its **nominative** form *who* and its irregularly spelled **genitive** form *whose*, it also has an **accusative** form, *whom*. This is vastly less common than the nominative (*who* is at least thirty times more frequent than *whom*). The factors affecting the choice between *who* and *whom* are roughly the same as for interrogatives (see §10.2.5):

- The **nominative** is required when *who* is in **subject** or **predicative complement** function (as in *the woman who laughed* or *I don't know who that is*).
- The **complement in a fronted PP** is normally **accusative** (*the man to whom she got engaged*).
- Otherwise, when the *wh* word corresponds to some non-subject function, we find **BOTH** case forms occur: *the man who she met* and *the man whom she met* are both normal Standard English, though the accusative is distinctly more formal in style.

Whom as the first word of a clause is now extremely rare in conversation. That is, hardly any contemporary speakers utter interrogatives like *?Whom have you chosen?*. And in relative clauses the decision about whether to use *whom* can be conveniently avoided by using a non-*wh* construction – the examples in [20] illustrate the range of possibilities in integrated relatives:

- | | | | |
|------|-----|--|--|
| [20] | i | <i>the applicants <u>who</u> we interviewed</i> | [nominative; normal style] |
| | ii | <i>the applicants <u>whom</u> we interviewed</i> | [accusative: distinctly formal] |
| | iii | <i>the applicants <u>that</u> we interviewed</i> | [<i>that</i> relative: stylistically neutral] |
| | iv | <i>the applicants we interviewed</i> | [bare relative: stylistically neutral] |

12.4 Fused Relatives

The final relative construction we examine in this chapter is the **fused relative**, illustrated in the bracketed constituents in [21]:

- [21] i [*Whoever said that*] *was trying to mislead you.*
 ii *I've eaten* [*what you gave me*].
 iii [*Whichever volume I want*] *is always missing.*

The bracketed parts here are NPs, not clauses. (This is why the title of this chapter refers to **relative constructions**, not just relative clauses.) The antecedent and the relativized element are fused together instead of being expressed separately (see §5.7).

- *Whoever* in [i] is simultaneously head of the NP and subject of the relative clause that modifies it. Its personal gender indicates that we are talking about some

person. The meaning is similar to that of a sentence with an NP containing an ordinary relative clause: *The person who said that was trying to mislead you.*

- *What* in [ii] is likewise head of the NP, but is also interpreted as if it were the object of the *gave* VP in the relative clause. That is, we understand it as saying that I've eaten the thing of which "you gave me it" is true. The non-personal gender gives a meaning like that of the non-fused (and distinctly more formal) *I've eaten [that which you gave me]*. (Notice, in the phrase *that which you gave me*, the word *that* is stressed: it's the demonstrative determinative, in the determiner-head fusion construction; it's not the subordinator, which is nearly always unstressed.)
- In [iii] the dual role is assumed by the NP *whichever volume*, with the determinative *whichever* as its determiner. The bracketed NP is understood as "any volume for which 'I want it' is true". But notice, while *whichever volume* corresponds to the object of the *want* VP, it is also the syntactic head of the entire NP *whichever volume I want*: because of that, crucially, we get the singular agreement form *is*. If *volume* is replaced by its plural, that changes: we get *Whichever volumes I want are always missing*. So, the *whichever* NP really is playing two roles at once.

12.4.1 Relative Words in the Fused Construction

The major relative words that occur in this construction (compare with those appearing in ordinary relative clauses, as set out in [18]) are as follows:

- [22] i *who* *whom* *what* (D and N) *which* (D and N) *where* *when*
 ii *whoever* *whomever* *whatever* (D and N) *whichever* (D and N) *wherever* *whenever*

- The compound forms in [ii] do not occur in the ordinary relative constructions that we've seen in previous sections (**the people whoever did this* is not grammatical). And in Standard English, *what* doesn't either (*'the people what care* is not grammatical in Standard English – in fact it's stereotypical of one variety of non-standard London dialect).
- On the other hand, *who*, *whom*, and *which* occur in the fused construction only under very limited conditions (usually with verbs like **choose**, **want**, and **like**, as in *I'll invite who I want*). For example, in Present-day English *who* could not replace *whoever* in [21i]: **Who said that was trying to mislead you*. It was different 400 years ago; Shakespeare has a character (Iago in 'Othello') saying 'Who steals my purse steals trash', where 'who steals my purse' is a fused relative with *who*.

What as Determinative

The *what* of [21ii] (*I've eaten what you gave me*) is a pronoun, but in fused relatives (and ONLY in fused relatives) the relative word *what* can also occur as a determinative:

[23] [What mistakes she made] were trivial.

The fusion here involves *what mistakes*. On the one hand, the NP *what mistakes*, with *what* as the determiner and *mistakes* as the head, is subject of the clause where *were very minor* is the predicate (notice, *were* agrees with the plural *mistakes*). On the other hand, *what mistakes* corresponds to the object of the *made* VP in the relative clause. The meaning of *what mistakes she made* is roughly the same as that of *the mistakes that she made*, so we understand that there are some mistakes she made; but determinative *what* carries a shade of extra meaning in fused relatives: it implies a relatively small number or amount. That is, [23] implies (though it doesn't entail) that she made only a small number of mistakes. *What mistakes she made* is actually understood rather like *the relatively few mistakes that she made*.

12.4.2 Fused Relatives and Interrogative Content Clauses

Fused relatives and interrogative content clauses show some overlap with respect to where they can appear, and there can be ambiguity between the two:

- | | | | |
|------|-----|--|--|
| [24] | i | <i>I really liked [<u>what she wrote</u>].</i> | [fused relative] |
| | ii | <i>I wonder [<u>what she wrote</u>].</i> | [interrogative content clause] |
| | iii | <i>[<u>What she wrote</u>] is unclear.</i> | [ambiguous: relative or interrogative] |

- In [i] we have an unambiguous fused relative, because, because the verb *like* does not license an interrogative clause as a complement (we don't say **I like who that is*).
- In [ii] we have an unambiguous interrogative clause: *wonder* licenses an interrogative clause as complement, but doesn't allow an NP object, so *what she wrote* in [ii] has to be an interrogative clause (meaning "I wonder which answer to the question 'What did she write?' is the correct one").
- In [iii] we have the adjective *unclear*, which has two senses: one is "confusing and hard to understand" (as in *His explanations are always unclear*) and the other is "lacking any known answer" (as in *How the universe began is unclear*). So, either an NP or an interrogative content clause can make sense as the subject of the clause headed by the predicate *is unclear*, and [iii] can be interpreted in either way. Taking *what she wrote* to be a fused relative NP, [iii] means "The stuff she wrote is confusing and hard to understand"; and taking it to be an interrogative content clause it means "The question of what exactly she wrote lacks a known answer".

There are various tests for checking whether an occurrence of *what* is interrogative or relative. A particularly simple one is to try adding *else*, which is only compatible with interrogative status. *I wonder what else she wrote* is grammatical, but **I really liked what else she wrote* is not.

12.5 A Relative Clause that Doesn't Modify a Noun

There is a special subtype of integrated relative that doesn't modify a noun at all (further underlining the error of the traditional term 'adjective clause'). It's found in what is called the 'cleft' construction, illustrated by *It was me who they were laughing at*. Notice that the underlined part has the structure of an integrated relative clause. We won't discuss this construction here; for reasons relating to discourse roles it makes sense to postpone discussion of this construction until §16.5.

Exercises on Chapter 12

1. Underline the (a) relative clauses and (b) declarative content clauses in the following examples and say whether they are (a), (b), or (c) ambiguous between the two. Give evidence in support of your answers.
 - i *She ridiculed the idea that he had proposed.* (Hint: try *the good idea* and *the very idea*.)
 - ii *The fact that it's illegal didn't seem to bother them.*
 - iii *I've lost the map that you lent me.*
 - iv *He was motivated by the conviction that he had been seriously wronged.*
 - v *They are spreading a rumour that is causing her great distress.*
2. Each of the following examples contains either a relative clause or content clause: underline those that are relative, and for each of them identify the antecedent and the function of the (overt or covert) relativized element (see §12.1.2).
 - i *I wonder who they have in mind for the job.*
 - ii *I made a mistake I'll never forget.*
 - iii *Go back the way you came.*
 - iv *The prize was awarded to the girl who spoke first.*
 - v *He's not the man he used to be.*
 - vi *It's the only movie I've seen this year.*
 - vii *The fact that they are cousins is irrelevant.*
 - viii *Renewing licenses is a hassle for women whose names have changed.*
 - ix *She goes to the same school that her mother went to.*
 - x *Which is the one you said you liked best?*
3. Convert any non-*wh* relatives in the following examples into their *wh*-relative counterparts.
 - i *This is the house that Jack built.*
 - ii *The reason he resigned was that he wanted to spend more time with his family.*
 - iii *The one that impressed me most was your sister.*

- iv *Do you remember the time we first went out together?*
 - v *The concept that the agency came up with is really insulting.*
 - vi *The guy she's talking to is my boss.*
 - vii *They're someone I wouldn't want to quarrel with.*
 - viii *Do you have a socket wrench I could borrow?*
 - ix *They said that the one that I wanted was sold out.*
 - x *That car made the one that I was driving look pretty mediocre.*
4. The following examples are presented without the usual internal punctuation so as to avoid giving any clues as to whether the relative clauses are **integrated** or **supplementary**. Identify the relative clauses, and for each say whether it could be interpreted in either way (with corresponding differences in meaning and punctuation) or in only one way. In the latter case, specify which interpretation is required and explain why the other is excluded.
- i *This year we're going to Majorca which is where we spent our honeymoon.*
 - ii *'The Necklace' which her colleague had written will be published next year.*
 - iii *Lisa has just gone down with flu which means that the wedding will be postponed.*
 - iv *The only thing I can't understand is why you appointed him in the first place.*
 - v *They're interviewing the neighbours who saw her leave.*
 - vi *She was deeply offended by the letter which accused her of racism.*
 - vii *No one who has studied the evidence could possibly doubt her innocence.*
 - viii *He's going to resign which is exactly the right course of action.*
 - ix *I took with me any files that I was responsible for.*
 - x *This is Pat who I am working with.*
5. Determine whether the underlined expressions below are: (a) **fused relatives** (see §12.4.2); (b) **open interrogative content clauses**; or (c) **ambiguous** between the two. Give evidence to support your answer.
- i *I don't know who caused the accident.*
 - ii *You can do whatever you like.*
 - iii *What she wrote is completely illegible.*
 - iv *They've already spent what I gave them yesterday.*
 - v *I won't be resigning, whatever the report says.*
 - vi *I told them what you told me to tell them.*
 - vii *I asked what else I could do.*
 - viii *What Frankenstein has created will one day destroy him.*
 - ix *What Frankenstein has created is so far unknown.*
 - x *We must find whoever did this.*
6. [Supplementary exercise] Popular discussions of relative clauses typically take an approach that distinguishes between *that* and *which* relatives. Why is this not the right line to draw?

7. [Supplementary exercise] It is important to distinguish between open interrogative content clauses with interrogative phrase as or in the subject and those without, just as it is important to distinguish between relative clauses with relative phrase as or in the subject and those without. Describe the differences in each case.
8. [Supplementary exercise] Combine the clauses in each of the following items (from “The Paradox of Choice” by Barry Schwartz) into a single sentence by making them into content or relative clauses. This may require quite significant reworking. You may add prepositions, but no coordinators (you can keep any existing coordinators).
 - i *Well we could do A or we could do B. A has these benefits and these risks. B has these benefits and these risks. What do you want to do?*
 - ii *We end up less satisfied with the result of the choice than we would be if we had fewer options to choose from. There are several reasons for this. One of them is that, with so many choices, it's easy to imagine that you could have made a different choice that would've been better.*
 - iii *Here's another example. Now, this cartoon makes a lot of points. It makes points about living in the moment as well. One point it makes is that whenever you're choosing one thing, you're choosing not to do other things. Those other things may have lots of attractive features. It's going to make what you're doing less attractive.*
 - iv *I wear jeans almost all the time. There was a time when jeans came in one flavour. You bought 'em. They fit like crap. They were incredibly uncomfortable. If you wore them long enough and washed them enough times, they started to fit, feel okay.*
9. Identify the category and function of the antecedent of each relative *which*.
 - i *A big part of a quarterback's job is to keep all his wide receivers happy, which is not easy.*
 - ii *Allegra also had on a white hoodie with a smiling bumblebee that said BEE HAPPY, which she wore with baggy jeans.*
 - iii *Bird's Mom left the family because she wasn't happy, which she's entitled to do.*
 - iv *Consider the proposition that Peter is not rich and not happy, which contains two instances of 'not'.*
 - v *I feel super kind of happy, which translates to pretty.*
 - vi *I try to be happy, which is a great way to be.*
 - vii *She's a quick wit who adores her wife and just wants to make her happy, which she does.*
 - viii *We seemed to make Mr. LeBlanc's crowds happy, which made him even happier.*
 - ix *When they were happy, which wasn't as infrequent as it might have seemed, they were very happy.*
 - x *The game is constructed so that only a minority of the people can be happy, which is a frustrating outcome.*

10. In which cases can you replace *that* with a relative phrase or the converse? When you can't, explain what prevents it.
- i *And in the middle of nowhere is a place that, for decades, officially did not exist.*
 - ii *Guillaume tells us we can go to this place, which has only cheese.*
 - iii *I read reviews there but that isn't the way that I select a book.*
 - iv *It shows the artist letting go of precision in that way that watercolour demands.*
 - v *Most of the time, when we aren't looking at a bird, we talk to each other.*
 - vi *The company denies this was the reason that a white candidate got the job.*
 - vii *The offense goes back to an unholy time when Trudeau and Bentley wore horseshoes.*
 - viii *The only place that we could set the helicopter down was a bog.*
 - ix *You have many days to find the time that works for you.*
 - x *You need to become independent of selling your time, which is finite.*
11. In [10i, ii, ix, and x], a relative preposition (*where* or *when*) is not possible. Why is that?
12. Identify the function of the NP immediately containing the underlined relative clause, if applicable, along with that of the (covert) relativized element in the relative clause.
- i *Are we meeting our moral obligation to the people who we send out to fight our battles?*
 - ii *Every word that the precisionist poet uses should correspond to a verifiable thing.*
 - iii *Freeze it five to six hours, which I know sounds like an eternity.*
 - iv *He's an oily impresario trying to fool the well-meaning but slightly innocent circus workers whose lives he's bought.*
 - v *I just saw the sign that said "dachshund".*
 - vi *Their bohemian style kept me entertained during a time when I was bored with life.*
 - vii *There's that awkward situation when you don't know if you need to tip someone or not.*
 - viii *They would tell me who I was funnier than.*
 - ix *This is the hotel I work for's truck.*
 - x *What can you buy the angler who doesn't want a carry-on boat bag?*
13. [Supplementary exercise] Construct a plausible sentence in which there are six or more layers of subordinate clauses.
14. [Supplementary exercise] Unfuse the following fused relatives, if possible. (A supplement with *regardless* may be useful in some cases.)

- i *He is a reminder of when even archaeologists sold finds to support their work.*
 - ii *I'll give whoever wants it my imaginary soul for however long they desire.*
 - iii *It means you get whatever care you need.*
 - iv *More windfall to the top does not increase what trickles down.*
 - v *That's what I'm afraid of.*
 - vi *This witness led us to where he says you deposited this trash.*
 - vii *Voters are picking temperament as what matters for them right now.*
 - viii *What dreams I had were full of dark water and silver herring.*
 - ix *Whatever they gave him that he didn't need he passed on to me.*
 - x *Whenever I see her, she's thinking up nefarious plots.*
15. [Supplementary exercise] In [4], we provide evidence that there is a covert object for *needed* by showing that the addition of *the director's permission* as an object renders the sentence ungrammatical. It may have occurred to you that this can be fixed simply by adding *for*. In other words, there's nothing at all wrong with *The video that I needed the director's permission for was not obtainable*. Explain why this does not undermine our general claim that there is a covert phrase and construct an ungrammatical sentence including *for* to support your point.
16. Explain why the times and locations in each example have to be indicated by the relative pronoun *which*, not the relative prepositions *where* or *when*.
- i *The notation # +hh:mm # indicates that the time is a local time which is hh hours and mm minutes ahead of UTC.*
 - ii *I arrived at a place which was about a day's train journey from Moscow.*
 - iii *Public schools are the only institutional place through which virtually all members of this society pass.*
 - iv *Set a time after which you will not check email.*
 - v *The only thing we have to lose is time, which we could spend on more worthy issues.*

13

Comparatives and Superlatives

This chapter is devoted to the complex ways provided by English morphology and syntax for describing something as ranking above or below something else on a scale of measurement (comparison of inequality), or as being equivalent to something on that scale (comparison of equality), or as falling at the very top or the very bottom of the scale (set comparison).

13.1 Grade Inflection

As we saw in §6.1.1, many **adjectives** inflect for what is known as **grade**: they have **plain**, **comparative**, and **superlative** forms. This inflectional system applies also to a small number of other lexemes in the **determinative** and **adverb** categories. Examples are given in [1]:

[1]		ADJECTIVE	DETERMINATIVE	ADVERB
i	PLAIN	<i>tall</i>	<i>many</i>	<i>soon</i>
ii	COMPARATIVE	<i>taller</i>	<i>more</i>	<i>sooner</i>
iii	SUPERLATIVE	<i>tallest</i>	<i>most</i>	<i>soonest</i>

The inflected forms of *tall* and *soon* are **regular**, formed by general rules of adding the suffixes *·er* or *·est*. The forms for *many*, however, are **irregular**: they are not predictable by any general rule.

Although ‘comparative’ is the standard name for just one of the forms, the semantic concept of **comparison** is relevant to the whole system of grade.

13.1.1 The Superlative and Set Comparison

Superlatives express **set comparison**: comparison between the members of some set with respect to their position on the scale denoted by the relevant lexeme, with one member (or subset) located at a position on that scale that outranks all of the others. We can illustrate with the same concepts as in [1] – namely height, numerical quantity, and temporal proximity:

- [2] i *Max was the tallest boy in the class.*
 ii *A prize will be given to whoever scores the most points.*
 iii *I chose the life policy that will mature the soonest.*

- In [i], the comparison is between the set of boys in the class with respect to height. *Tall* is the lexeme that denotes the scale. Max occupies a higher position on this scale than any of the others.
- In [ii], the set is not expressed in the sentence itself, it's implicit: it consists of those participating in some kind of competition in which points are scored. The scale is the number of points scored. The prize will be given to the participant who ranks top on this scale.
- In [iii], the comparison is between a set of life insurance policies, ranked by date of maturing. *Soon* tells us the scale: how early the maturation date is. I chose the one that matures earlier than all others in the set.

13.1.2 The Comparative and Term Comparison

The comparative form, by contrast, is predominantly used in **term comparison** – comparison between a **primary** term and a **secondary** term (where a 'term' is generally something like an implied arithmetical value), as in [3]:

- [3] i *Max is taller than Tom.*
 ii *Sue scored more runs than I did.*
 iii *This policy will mature sooner than that one.*

In [i] the comparison is between Max's height and Tom's height. The sentence doesn't say how tall either of them is absolutely, but expresses the relation between them. Using 'X' and 'Y' as variables over quantities or degrees, we can say that [3i] means: "Max is X tall, Tom is Y tall, and $X > Y$ ". This format enables us to handle the distinction between this type of term comparison and that illustrated in [4]:

- [4] *The tower is taller than 100 metres.*

Here the comparison is between the height of the tower and a specific fixed height, 100 metres. Here there's only one variable: "The tower is X meters tall, and $X > 100$ ".

- The **primary** term in [3i] is "Max is X tall", and the **secondary** one is "Tom is Y tall".
- In [ii], "Sue scored X many runs" is primary and "I scored Y many runs" is secondary.
- In [iii], "this policy matures X soon" is primary and "that policy matures Y soon" is secondary.

The secondary term can be left unexpressed if it is recoverable from the context, as it is in these examples:

- [5] i *Tim is quite tall, but [Max is taller].*
 ii *That's better.* (Imagine this being said after you've opened a window.)
- In [i], we understand “Max is taller than Tim”, recovering “Tim” from the first clause.
 - In [ii], as uttered in the context indicated in parentheses, we understand “That is better than it was before you opened the window”; the secondary term is recovered from the situation. (*Better* is another irregular form: it's the comparative of *good*.)

13.1.3 Set Comparison with Comparative Forms

Comparative forms are also used in set comparisons when the set has just two members:

- [6] COMPARATIVE SUPERLATIVE
 a. *Bram is the taller of the two.* b. *Bram is the tallest of the three.*

The comparative form *taller* is inadmissible in [b].

Usage Controversy Note

Some usage manuals say that the superlative form is incorrect when the set has only two members (*the tallest of the two towers*). However, the superlative is the default for set comparison, and it's fairly common as an informal variant of the comparative with two-member sets. It is relatively unlikely when the two-member status of the set is explicitly given in an *of*-phrase, as in [6a], but consider sentences like *Mia and Matt were the only candidates, and Mia was clearly the best*. That's certainly grammatical.

13.1.4 Implicit Comparison with Plain Forms

Even a plain form may implicitly involve comparison when the lexeme is gradable, as in *Max is tall*, which implicitly compares Max's height with that of people in general, and saying that it falls in the upper area of the scale. And in *Max is tall for a boy of his age* the *for* phrase identifies the set within which the comparison is made: his height falls in the upper area of the scale of height applying to boys of his age. In contrast, either a process is a chemical process or it isn't, so it would make no sense to say **Oxidization is chemical for a process*.

13.1.5 Non-Inflectional Marking of Grade

As we noted in §6.1.1, comparative and superlative grade may be expressed by a separate word, *more* or *most*, rather than by inflection. Examples are given in [7]:

[7]		ADJECTIVE	ADVERB
i	PLAIN	<i>useful</i>	<i>rashly</i>
ii	COMPARATIVE	<i>more useful</i>	<i>more rashly</i>
iii	SUPERLATIVE	<i>most useful</i>	<i>most rashly</i>

The choice between the two ways of marking comparative and superlative grade – by inflection or by a separate word – is discussed in our appendix on morphology, which can be found online at www.cambridge.org/SIEG2.

13.2 *More and Most*

The two words *more* and *most* figure in both the tables given as [1] and [7]: they can be either inflectional forms of the determinatives *many* and *much* or they can be adverbs marking non-inflectional comparatives and superlatives of adjectives and adverbs.

13.2.1 *More as Determinative*

[8]	PLAIN GRADE	COMPARATIVE GRADE
i	a. <i>He didn't make <u>many</u> mistakes.</i>	b. <i>He made <u>more</u> mistakes than you did.</i>
ii	a. <i>We don't have <u>much</u> time.</i>	b. <i>We have <u>more</u> time than we need.</i>
iii	a. <i>I didn't enjoy it <u>much</u>.</i>	b. <i>I enjoyed it <u>more</u> than last time.</i>

The *more* of the [b] examples here is a **determinative**, the comparative counterpart of plain *many* and *much* in the corresponding [a] examples. The determinative is functioning as the determiner in NP structure in [i] and [ii], and as an adjunct of degree in the clause in [iii].

Correspondence between the grades is complicated by the fact that the plain forms *much* (and, to a lesser extent, *many*) are **non-affirmative** items, in the sense we explained in §9.4. This is why negative clauses are used in the [a] examples of [8]; it is not normal in present-day English to say, for example, **We have much time* or **We enjoyed it much*.

13.2.2 *More as Adverb*

[9]	PLAIN GRADE	COMPARATIVE GRADE
i	a. <i>It's <u>expensive</u>.</i>	b. <i>It's <u>more expensive</u> than I expected.</i>
ii	a. <i>She behaved <u>tactfully</u>.</i>	b. <i>She behaved <u>more tactfully</u> than her son.</i>

Here *more* is an **adverb**. In [i], its AdvP modifies the AdjP headed by *expensive*; in [ii], it modifies the AdvP headed by *tactfully*. It is a marker of the **comparative grade**. The difference between [9] and [8] is that there is no *much* or *many* in the plain grade [a] version in [9].

13.2.3 *Most*

The same distinction applies with *most*:

- [10] i a. *He didn't make many mistakes.* b. *He made the most mistakes.*
 ii a. *It's expensive.* b. *It's the most expensive of them all.*

- In [ib], *most* is a **determinative** – the superlative form of *many*.
- In [iib], it is an **adverb**, marking *most expensive* as superlative.

However, there is an additional, non-superlative, sense of the adverb: it can mean “extremely” or “very”, as in *I found her most helpful*. Here *most* is an adverb, but has nothing to do with superlative grade. There's no explicit comparison between members of a set: *most* just indicates a high degree.

Note that adding the determiner *the* excludes this meaning and changes the syntactic structure: *the most helpful* is not an AdjP but an NP, with *most helpful* as fused modifier-head (cf. §5.7.3).

13.3 *Less and Least*

The words *less* and *least* similarly belong to both the determinative and adverb categories. As determinatives they are inflectional forms of *little*; as adverbs they head degree modifiers. These examples illustrate for *less*:

- [11] i a. *It has little value.* b. *It has less value than he claimed.*
 ii a. *It's expensive.* b. *It's less expensive than I expected.*
 iii a. *She behaved tactfully.* b. *She behaved less tactfully than her son.*

- In [ib] the determinative *less* has the same function, determiner, as *little* in [ia].
- In [iib–iiib] the degree adverb *less* is added as modifier to an AdjP or AdvP.

13.3.1 The Determinative *Less*

As a determinative, *less* is syntactically quite similar to its opposite *more*, but there are also significant differences. *More* is the comparative form of both *many* and *much*, which occur with plural and non-count singular nouns respectively. The opposites of *many* and *much* are *few* and *little*, and these have distinct comparative forms *fewer* and *less*. Compare:

- | | | |
|------|---|--|
| [12] | PLURAL | NON-COUNT SINGULAR |
| i | a. <i>He's had <u>more jobs</u> than me.</i> | b. <i>He's had <u>more experience</u> than me.</i> |
| ii | a. <i>He's had <u>fewer jobs</u> than me.</i> | b. <i>He's had <u>less experience</u> than me.</i> |

Matters are complicated, however, by the fact that *less* (unlike *little*) is often used with plurals:

- [13] i a. *It cost less than twenty dollars.* b. *?It cost fewer than twenty dollars.*
 ii a. *Less than twenty people voted.* b. *Fewer than twenty people voted.*
 iii a. *⁹⁰He's had less jobs than me.* b. *He's had fewer jobs than me.*

- In [i], *twenty dollars* is construed as an amount of money, not a set of individual dollars, so *fewer than twenty dollars* sounds very strange and would be distinctly unusual.
- In [ii], where we again have a numeral after *than*, both forms are possible, with *fewer* less common and somewhat formal.
- In [iii], the determinative is followed immediately by a plural noun. This use of *less* is informal; it is avoided by many speakers and much condemned by usage manuals.

13.3.2 The Adverb *Less*

As an adverb, *less* also contrasts with the adverb *more* that marks comparative grade. *More* marks superiority (a higher degree on the relevant scale), while *less* marks inferiority (a lower degree). Superiority, however, can also be marked inflectionally, whereas there is no inflection corresponding to *less*. So we have this pattern:

- | | | | | |
|------|----|---|--|---|
| [14] | | COMPARISON OF SUPERIORITY | | COMPARISON OF INFERIORITY |
| | i | a. <i>Dale is <u>taller</u> than Pat.</i> | | b. <i>Dale is <u>less tall</u> than Pat.</i> |
| | ii | a. <i>Dale is <u>more energetic</u> than Pat.</i> | | b. <i>Dale is <u>less energetic</u> than Pat.</i> |

13.4 Comparison of Equality

Superiority and inferiority represent two kinds of *inequality*, but there are also comparisons of *equality*. This, like inferiority, is always marked by a modifying phrase rather than by inflection (except in non-scalar comparisons; see §13.5):

- [15] i *Dale is as tall as Pat.*
 ii *Dale is as energetic as Pat.*

We use the standard term ‘equality’ to contrast this construction with those in [14], but it is important to emphasize that it is usually not a matter of EXACT EQUALITY.

- Example [15i] says that Dale’s height is AT LEAST EQUAL to Pat’s, not that it is IDENTICAL. We can say, without contradiction: *Dale is as tall as Pat, in fact slightly taller.* And the negative *Dale isn’t as tall as Pat* entails that Dale is SHORTER than Pat, not simply that Dale’s height is different (either lower or higher on the height scale).

- In [15ii], Dale is at least as high on the energetic scale as Pat. As normally understood, *energetic* does not denote a quality that can be precisely measured, as height can, so the issue of whether Dale and Pat are exactly equal on this scale (in the sense of the arithmetical relation ‘=’) doesn’t really arise. If and when it does, a modifying adverb like *exactly* or *precisely* can be used to say something is *exactly as X as* something else, where X is some AdjP or AdvP.

Each of the examples in [15] contains two occurrences of *as*.

- The first *as* is an adverb of degree, like *more* and *less* except that it can modify determinatives (or DPs): *I had as much cash as you* (contrast **I had more much cash than you*).
- The second *as* is NOT an adverb; it’s a preposition, like *than*. *As* is used for equality, and *than* for inequality.

In some contexts, primarily negatives (and especially in informal style), the adverb *as* is replaceable by *so*, and in some familiar phrases it is omitted altogether:

- [16] i a. *It wasn’t so straightforward as I’d been led to expect.*
 ii a. *The sea was flat as glass.*

13.5 Non-Scalar Comparison

All the comparisons considered so far have been concerned with relative positions on some scale – with relative degrees of some gradable property. There is also a type of comparison where the issue is not a matter of relative degree but simply of identity or similarity. We call this **non-scalar** comparison. The prepositions *as* and *than* are found here too, so we can generalize the contrast between equality (marked by *as*) and inequality (marked by *than*):

- [17] i EQUALITY *We went by the same route as we usually take.*
 ii INEQUALITY ^{0%}*We went by a different route than we usually take.*

The first expresses identity, the second non-identity, between the route we took (on the occasion in question) and the route we usually take.

The ^{0%} annotation indicates, as usual, that not all speakers use this construction (it is somewhat more frequent in AmE). Some speakers would use a more complex construction with *from* and an NP here: *We went by a different route from the one we usually take.*

There are two items, however, that license an indirect *than* complement for all speakers, namely *other* and *else* (see §5.4.1):

- [18] i *There must be some other way of doing it than this.*
 ii *Anyone else than you would have complained.*

We chose *different* in [17ii] because it contrasts more directly with *same*.

13.6 Comparative Clauses

The prepositions *than* and *as* often license as complements a distinctive type of subordinate clause called a **comparative clause**:

- [19] i *She did better in the exam than we'd thought she would.* [superiority]
 ii *The treatment was less painful than it was last time.* [inferiority]
 iii *The pool is nearly as wide as it is long.* [scalar equality]
 iv *They come from the same part of Britain as I come from.* [non-scalar equality]

There are two points about the terminology used here that should be noted.

- First, ‘comparative’ has a broader sense in ‘comparative clause’ than elsewhere. Comparative **forms** are always associated with comparisons of superiority, whereas comparative **clauses** are found in all the types of comparison considered above: superiority and inferiority, along with scalar and non-scalar equality.
- Second, ‘comparative clause’ applies to the subordinate clause expressing the secondary term in the comparison, the underlined clauses in [19], not to the matrix clause that expresses the comparison as a whole.

Comparative clauses constitute one of the three major kinds of **tensed subordinate clause** that we introduced in §11.1. What distinguishes them from **relative** and **content** clauses is that they are obligatorily **reduced** in certain ways relative to the structure of main clauses.

- In [19i], the complement of the *would* VP is left understood. We could add *do* (*than we thought she would do*), but there would still be a missing adjunct. The meaning can be given as “She did X well in the exam; we’d thought she would do Y well; and $X > Y$ ”; but the “Y well” part cannot be syntactically overt.
- Similarly, in [19ii], there is an obligatorily missing predicative complement; it’s understood as “Y painful”.
- It is not so obvious that we have reduction in [19iii], since *it is long* can occur as an unreduced main clause. Nevertheless, in this comparative construction there is a missing degree modifier corresponding to the variable Y. “The pool is nearly X wide; it is Y long; and $X = Y$ ”. The implicit degree modification of *long* makes it impossible to add an overt degree

modifier like *this* or *that* or *very*: **The pool is nearly as wide as it is this / that / very long.*

- Finally, in [19iv] the preposition *from* occurs without a complement. This can't happen in canonical clauses. Again, a complement is understood ("She comes from X part of Britain; I come from Y part of Britain; and $X = Y$ "), but it cannot be syntactically expressed. This represents a somewhat different case of preposition stranding from that discussed in §7.5, since there is no corresponding construction in which the preposition is fronted.

13.6.1 As in Non-Scalar Equality Comparison: *As Expected*

In the examples of preposition *as* + comparative clause given so far, the *as* is paired with the adverb *as* marking scalar equality (as in [19iii]) or with the adjective *same* marking non-scalar equality (as in [19iv] or [17i]). *As* can also occur in non-scalar comparison without any such preceding item to license it:

- [20] i *As we'd expected, he refused to compromise.*
 ii *He didn't behave as he usually does.*

- In [i], the comparison is between what we'd expected to happen and what did in fact happen. We can paraphrase the meaning as "We'd expected X; Y happened (i.e., he refused to compromise); and $X = Y$ ". Here the Y corresponds to a whole clause rather than to just a part of a clause.
- In [ii], we are comparing his behaviour on a particular occasion with his usual behaviour. We understand: "He didn't behave in X manner; he usually behaves in Y manner; and $X = Y$ ".

13.6.2 Comparative Clauses as Complements: *Like We Used To*

In non-scalar comparison of equality we also find comparative clauses after the preposition *like* – though *like* licenses content clauses as well. Compare, then:

- [21] i *We don't get along like we used to.* [comparative clause]
 ii *It looks like it's going to rain.* [content clause]

- In [i], we have the familiar kind of comparison between the way they get along (now) and the way they used to get along.
- The content clause construction in [ii] most often occurs after *look* or *sound*, and the meaning is similar to that with *appear* + content clause: *It appears that it's going to rain*. Unlike *we used to* in [i], *it's going to rain* is not reduced – because it's not a comparative clause, it's a content clause.

Usage Controversy Note

Conservative usage manuals tend to disapprove of both constructions in [21], where *like* is a preposition licensing a tensed subordinate clause as complement. They call it ‘using *like* as a conjunction’ (because they use the traditional term ‘subordinating conjunction’ for prepositions that take a content clause as complement), and insist that *like* should be replaced by *as* in [i] and by *as if* or *as though* in [ii].

The versions with *like* are fairly informal, but they are very well established, especially in AmE. Nonetheless, there were shocked media reactions in 1954 when the R. J. Reynolds Tobacco Company introduced the slogan ‘Winston tastes good like a cigarette should’. The famous TV news show host Walter Cronkite refused to read it out on air in the advertising endorsement. That all looks very old-fashioned now. Very few people today would take the sentences in [21] to be ungrammatical.

Exercises on Chapter 13

1. What are the lexical categories of the underlined words?
 - i Patients may be better able to control the disease
 - ii Closer to election day, the audience is much larger.
 - iii The spelling corresponds more closely to an earlier stage of the language.
 - iv A little farther from their house, the road deteriorates into a dirt track.
 - v Can't you go any faster?
 - vi He's making fewer mistakes.
 - vii It makes little sense.
 - viii Our more general intellectual debts will, we hope, be obvious.
 - ix It is necessary to indicate more distinctions than usual.
 - x It had not been seen in the area prior to today.
2. Underline each AdjP headed by a comparative adjective.
 - i You have very fine linen closest to the body, then slightly cruder linen on top.
 - ii Lovelock foresees a still grimmer future.
 - iii My efforts yielded nothing but an even thicker coating of putrid slime.
 - iv She felt a lot sorrier for the guy who owned the place.
 - v That's a bit roomier than the lunar landers were.
 - vi The minimum shear strength ratio allowed is considerably higher than typical values.
 - vii There may be a yet deeper dimension to Trilling's lack of will.
 - viii They are far slicker and much better liars.

- ix *Whale ancestors probably still returned to land to mate and give birth, schlumping along on ever punier hind legs.*
 - x *Breathing was something altogether different.*
3. Re-express the content of the following in a more natural way using **comparative** or **superlative** constructions.
- i *The extent to which my dad is big exceeds the extent to which yours is.*
 - ii *They are the swimmer who is ranked top in the world as regards speed.*
 - iii *That is a fish that is ugly beyond the ugliness of any fish I have ever seen.*
 - iv *I wish I had a degree of discomfort that failed to rise to the level that I actually have.*
 - v *The degree to which you are a good guitarist would increase if the time you practised were to increase.*
4. Using variables as appropriate, give the **primary** and **secondary** terms in the comparisons expressed in the examples below, following the model used in the commentary on [3–4] in the text.

Example: *The hotel felt more comfortable than my own home did.*

The hotel felt X comfortable [primary term]; my own home felt Y comfortable [secondary term].

- i *Fido can run a lot faster than Rex.*
 - ii *We're hoping to finish as early as tomorrow.*
 - iii *More people came to the meeting than we had seats for.*
 - iv *The meeting lasted longer than expected.*
 - v *You can take as many copies as you need.*
 - vi *More people believed that it was genuine than that it was a hoax.*
 - vii *He had a more powerful motor-bike than I had had.*
 - viii *Jill thinks Ed's better off than he is.*
 - ix *Jill thinks Ed's better off than he does.*
 - x *I got up later than usual this morning.*
5. In each case, what is the set from which members are compared, if the comparison is taken literally.

Example: *This is the best tea I've ever had.*

The set of all teas that I've ever had.

- i *Kingston is located in one of the driest parts of the island of Jamaica.*
- ii *I wouldn't have the faintest idea what Richard Marx's hair looks like.*
- iii *This type of loan is the surest way of paying off your home loan.*
- iv *They are some of the friendliest people I have ever worked with.*
- v *Everybody's nose blows up and it's the weirdest thing.*

- vi *Trees are one of the commonest causes of conflict between neighbours.*
- vii *The cat gym is the cutest thing ever.*
- viii *It is also one of the cleanest beaches in the whole of southeast Asia.*
- ix *The harshest criticism of Fitzgerald was that he was autocratic.*
- x *You paid for only the tiniest fraction of the goods and services you enjoy every day.*

6. Underline all the **comparative clauses** (and no other clauses) in the following examples (all from Lewis Carroll's Alice books, *Alice in Wonderland* and *Through the Looking Glass*).

- i *It was as much as she could do, lying down on one side, to look through into the garden with one eye.*
- ii *'But then,' thought Alice, 'shall I never get any older than I am now?'*
- iii *'If everybody minded their own business,' the Duchess said in a hoarse growl, 'the world would go round a deal faster than it does.'*
- iv *This piece of rudeness was more than Alice could bear: she got up in great disgust, and walked off.*
- v *It was evidently more than he could manage by himself; however, she managed to shake him out of it at last.*

7. What is the full set of words that take comparative clause complements?

8. [Supplementary exercise] Compare the following examples:

- i *She knows far more people than I know.*
- ii *She's the kindest person I know.*

The underlined expression is a **comparative clause** in [i] but not in [ii]: what kind of a clause is it in [ii]? What grammatical evidence is there for assigning *I know* to different subcategories of subordinate clause in the two examples? Show how the difference ties in semantically with the distinction we have drawn between **term comparison** and **set comparison**.

9. [Supplementary exercise] *Same* occurs in (among others) the constructions illustrated in the following:

- i *She stayed in the same hotel as we stayed in.*
- ii *She stayed in the same hotel we stayed in.*

Describe the syntactic difference between these constructions and explain why the examples have the same meaning even though they are syntactically different.

10. Identify the category and function of the underlined phrases.

- i *If at first you don't succeed, lower your standards.*
- ii *Is it just me or is it getting crazier out there?*

- iii *Keep your friends close, but keep your enemies closer.*
 - iv *Maybe he just needs the subtlest of nudges.*
 - v *See our family. And feel better about yours.*
 - vi *The longer you wait, the harder it gets.*
 - vii *The nearer they get to the treasure the farther they get from the law.*
 - viii *What's the most you ever lost on a coin toss?*
 - ix *When you realize you want to spend the rest of your life with somebody, you want the rest of your life to start as soon as possible.*
 - x *You're going to need a bigger boat.*
11. [Supplementary exercise] Use an etymological dictionary to answer this question: Which of these words share the comparative *-er* suffix?
- i *adviser*
 - ii *after*
 - iii *disclaimer*
 - iv *Dubliner*
 - v *elevator*
 - vi *flicker*
 - vii *hardier*
 - viii *lower*
 - ix *teacher*
 - x *under*
12. Identify any indirect complements (see §5.4.1) in [2], [4], and [6].
13. [Supplementary exercise] We take *less* to be a determinative in some cases and an adverb in others. What would be the advantages and disadvantages of analysing it to be a determinative in all cases?
14. Give main clause analogues containing deictic *this* or *that* for the comparative clauses or phrases in the following examples.
- Example: *He's as tall as I am. He's this tall.*
- i *Being a creator is harder than it looks.*
 - ii *Clean-up is looking a little better than I expected.*
 - iii *I love these exercises more than you can imagine.*
 - iv *That's more than I can say about my brother.*
 - v *That's just a little more than I wanted to know about love.*
 - vi *This is starting to seem like more trouble than it's worth.*
 - vii *You need this more than I do.*
 - viii *You're helping me out more than you know.*
 - ix *You've always been capable of more than you think.*
 - x *You've saved my life more times than I can count.*

15. [Supplementary exercise] Using a selected corpus of prose text, determine which member of each of the following pairs is more common. Discuss any conclusions or surprises.

- i *angrier, more angry*
- ii *commoner, more common*
- iii *costlier, more costly*
- iv *gentler, more gentle*
- v *likelier, more likely*
- vi *livelier, more lively*
- vii *pleasanter, more pleasant*
- viii *subtler, more subtle*
- ix *surer, more sure*
- x *unlikelier, more unlikely*

14 Non-Finite Clauses

This chapter studies the properties of a class of clauses we have hardly looked at so far: subordinate clauses that aren't tensed.

14.1 Finite and Non-Finite Clauses

There is a traditional distinction in English grammar between **finite** and **non-finite** clauses, which we've deliberately not mentioned so far. The idea is that the finite ones are the ones that are complete, much like main clauses, with subjects, and tense, and agreement inflection on the verb. They are capable of referring to situations at a specific place and time. Non-finite clauses, by contrast, are always subordinate, don't show tense or agreement information, often don't have a subject, and often refer to a mere possible situation rather than an actualized one.

The steady loss of inflections over the last millennium has rendered this distinction harder to define and less useful. Traditional grammars used to start by classifying verbs as 'finite' (the ones showing tense and agreement inflection) or 'non-finite' (the ones without such inflection) and then classify clauses according to whether or not they have a 'finite' head verb. But that doesn't work at all for present-day English. The definition is cumbersome and inelegant: a clause is finite if and only if either (i) it has a tensed head verb, or (ii) its head verb is an irrealis form of the verb *be*, or (iii) it is an instance of the subjunctive construction, or (iv) it is of imperative clause type.

However, it's easy to say what the topic of this chapter is: it's about all the other clauses – the ones that don't count as finite. These are of five kinds:

[1]	FIVE KINDS OF NON-FINITE CLAUSE	VERB FORM
i	<i>to</i> -INFINITIVAL <i>I want <u>to write</u> a novel.</i>	} PLAIN FORM
ii	BARE INFINITIVAL <i>I could <u>write</u> a novel.</i>	
iii	GERUND-PARTICIPIAL <i>I dream of <u>writing</u> a novel.</i>	GERUND-PARTICIPLE
iv	PAST-PARTICIPIAL <i>I have <u>written</u> a novel.</i>	PAST PARTICIPLE
v	VERBLESS <i>Me a novelist!</i>	(none)

We use the adjective suffix *-al* (or *-ial*) for naming kinds of clause, so that we never use the same term for a kind of clause as for an inflectional form of the verb. *Writing* and *written* are verb forms – the **gerund-participle** and the **past participle**, but the

underlined sequences in [iii–iv] are clauses that have those forms as their head verb. For them we use the related adjectives: they are **gerund-participial** and **past-participial** clauses.

Remember, there is no verb form in English that is appropriately called ‘the infinitive’. That term isn’t used in this book at all. **Infinitival clauses** are simply non-finite clauses with the head verb in the **plain form**. But the plain form also appears on the head verb of some finite clauses: **imperative** and **subjunctive** clauses. Just as no verb in English has distinct ‘gerund’ and ‘present participle’ forms (hence our term ‘gerund-participle’), there is also no verb in English with a special ‘infinitive’ form reserved for infinitival clauses.

14.2 The Form and Meaning of Non-Finite Clauses

In the case of [1i–iv], the predicate of a non-finite clause, its head, is a VP headed by a **secondary** form of the verb. Non-finite clauses NEVER HAVE PRIMARY TENSE (though they may have the secondary tense that expresses the perfect: see §3.5). It also means that they can NEVER CONTAIN A MODAL AUXILIARY – because, as noted in §3.2.2, the modals have only primary verb forms.

Non-finite clauses are normally embedded within a larger construction. (The ‘normally’ there is to make allowance for odd exceptions like *Not to worry!* or *Him failing a drug test!*: non-finite clauses that can be used as complete utterances on their own.) Some aspects of meaning not explicit in the non-finite clause can often be figured out from this larger construction. The examples in [2] illustrate how the time reference of the infinitival clause may depend on the verb in the matrix clause:

- [2] i *I remembered to discuss it with my doctor.*
 ii *I intended to discuss it with my doctor.*

- If [i] is true, then I actually DID talk to my doctor at the designated point in the past. The preterite inflection on **remember** locates both the remembering and the discussion in past time (though not necessarily in the same moment).
- If [ii] is true, however, that does NOT necessarily mean that I talked to my doctor. Indeed, it strongly suggests that I didn’t. **Intend**, unlike **remember**, has a meaning that involves projection into the future, even when it’s used in the past tense: the time of the intended action is always later than the time of the intention. There is no guarantee that intentions get carried out, which means [ii] doesn’t entail that my intended discussion ever happened.

With the finite main clause *I discussed it with my doctor*, matters are quite different. Because of its primary tense, the clause is self-sufficient: its form indicates that the

conversation took place in the past. A non-finite clause such as *to discuss it with my doctor* never carries its own primary tense to convey the location in time of the situation it talks about. Even a non-finite with secondary tense such as *to have discussed it* is ambiguous about the time referred to.

Various other features, not related to the verb form, further distinguish non-finite clauses from finite clauses (we'll return to this in §§14.2.1–14.2.4):

- Non-finite clauses may be subjectless, and in fact frequently are, so the predicand typically needs to be figured out from the larger construction. Finite clauses without subjects are few and exceptional (imperatives like *Go home*; main clauses with dropped subjects in casual speech like *Nearly missed it!*; and comparative clauses like the underlined part of *larger than was intended*).
- The distinctive infinitival subordinators *to* (before the verb) and *for* (before the subject) occur only in non-finite clauses.
- Certain non-finite clauses also have a non-subject NP missing (as in *worth looking at*; see §14.2.4).
- Non-finite clauses with personal pronoun subjects have various forms, those with nominative case (which is required in finite clauses) being the rarest.

14.2.1 Subordinators in *To*-Infinitivals: *To* and *For*

Subjectless *to*-infinitivals are marked by the initial word *to*. Historically, this word derives from the preposition *to* (and it's worth noting the vague 'motion toward' meaning in both *I went to a meeting with some colleagues* and *I went to meet some colleagues*), but long ago it diverged semantically and grammatically. It's not a preposition now. In fact it's grammatically unique: no other item has the same properties. In effect, it's a special marker for VPs of infinitival clauses, functioning rather like a subordinator. Alternatively, it could be regarded as behaving like a defective auxiliary verb that has only a plain form and no tensed forms or participles.

When a *to*-infinitival contains a subject, it also contains the subordinator *for*, which appears at the beginning of the clause, immediately before the subject:

- [3] i *[For John to lose his temper like that] is highly unusual.*
 ii *We've arranged [for everyone to travel business class].*

Again, the subordinator originates as the preposition *for*, and there is a vague similarity in meaning between *I longed for your return* and *I longed for you to return*. But the *for* illustrated in [3] now has very different properties from prepositional *for*: it behaves as a meaningless subordinator. It does for infinitival clauses with subjects what the subordinator *that* does for declarative content clauses.

Usage Controversy Note

Some very conservative usage books still warn against what they call the ‘split infinitive’, meaning the construction illustrated in *You’d expect them to occasionally disagree*, where the adjunct *occasionally* comes between *to* and the verb. The term ‘split infinitive’ is a misnomer: English doesn’t have an infinitive form of the verb like French and Spanish. *To disagree* is not a verb; it’s a sequence of two words, infinitival *to* and the plain form of the verb *disagree*. Each can occur independently: in *We may occasionally disagree but we try not to*, we see the plain form verb *disagree* without any *to*, and *to* without any verb.

No rule of English grammar requires these two separate words to be adjacent. Phrases with pre-head modifying adverbs as in *to occasionally disagree* have been in use for centuries. Most usage manuals now recognize this.

Yet professional journalists still write contorted and even ungrammatical sentences in order to avoid ‘split infinitives’. A leader in *The Economist* in December 2020 said that the British government had ‘abandoned its earlier plans unilaterally (and illegally) to rewrite the Northern Irish provisions of the withdrawal treaty’. This reads as if it is about unilateral and illegal ABANDONMENT OF PLANS. The intended meaning (which you couldn’t figure out from the sentence) is that it was a unilateral and illegal REWRITING OF A TREATY that was planned by the government. The right wording would have been: *abandoned its earlier plans to unilaterally (and illegally) rewrite the Northern Irish provisions*. In struggling to avoid a ‘split infinitive’ here, the writer sacrificed intelligibility on the altar of obedience to a fictional rule. The adjunct was shifted to a position where it doesn’t fit and is almost certain to be read as modifying the wrong verb.

Placing the adjunct between *to* and the verb is very often stylistically preferable to other orderings. For example, in a sentence like *It was certainly reasonable to at least consider doing so*, no attempt at moving the underlined adjunct succeeds in improving the sentence in any way; and in *Profits are expected to more than double*, moving it elsewhere seems impossible.

14.2.2 Subjectless Non-Finites

None of the non-finite clauses in [1i–iv] have subjects. But they still have to have the semantic equivalent, a predicand – something for the predicate of the non-finite clause to apply to. That is, we understand those clauses as though they did have subjects. For instance, [1i] (*I want to write a novel*) talks about more than just

my desire for a novel to be written. I want something else as well: I want my name on it. I want to be the author. So, we understand me to be the predicand not only of *want* but also of *write* – even though the 1st-person singular pronoun is not actually present in the *write* clause.

There are certain specific ways in which predicands are provided for non-finite clauses, and they are important.

Interpreting Subjectless Clauses

There are two different ways in which a predicand is associated with a predicate: one way involves a grammatical linkage that we will refer to as **syntactic determination**, and the other does not. These examples illustrate the difference:

- [4] i SYNTACTIC DETERMINATION
 a. *Ellen asked [to leave].*
 b. *Ellen asked Max [to leave].*
 ii NO SYNTACTIC DETERMINATION
 a. *It is unwise [to go swimming straight after a heavy meal].*
 b. *It was unwise [to invite Buster to the party].*

Syntactic Determination In [4i], where there is syntactic determination, we can immediately see what the predicand must be, simply by looking at a linguistic **antecedent**, which, in the above cases, is found in the matrix construction (the constituent that immediately includes the subjectless clause).

- In [ia], the matrix clause has the verb *ask* as its head verb, and this choice of verb determines that the subject of *ask* must be understood as also being the predicand of the non-finite clause: the request made by Ellen was not just that there would be a departure, but that Ellen would be the one leaving.
- In [ib], the matrix clause has an object NP, and this choice of construction determines that the object **MUST** be understood as the predicand of the non-finite clause. Ellen is not just calling for a departure; she wants it to be Max who leaves.

In such cases we say the retrieval of the predicand is syntactically determined. As we have seen, that rule picks out the matrix subject NP in [ia], but the object of the verb *asked* in [ib]. Different verbs force NPs in different functions to be the appropriate antecedent.

No Syntactic Determination In the cases in [4ii], by contrast, there is no syntactic determination. The meaning depends heavily on inference, that is to say, on pragmatics. Common sense settles things, rather than the grammar. And that

provides an opportunity for trouble in interpretation, because of course common sense can differ from one addressee to another.

- The salient interpretation of [iia] is that it applies quite generally: in effect, it means “It is unwise for anyone to go swimming straight after a heavy meal.” (Of course, if someone says it directly to you as you finish eating and put on your swimsuit, it would also be reasonable to think they meant “It would be unwise for you to go swimming straight after a heavy meal like the one you just ate.” But that’s an inference.)
- In [iib], however, we are talking about a particular past-time event of someone issuing an invitation to Buster to attend a party, so the predicand is understood to be that unwise person, whoever it was. It might have been explicitly stated earlier in the preceding discourse who issued the invitation, or it might not, but there doesn’t have to be any prior mention of the person. An accusing glance in my direction might be enough to suggest that it was me. And it’s certainly not necessary for any NP referring to the inviter to be located in some designated syntactic position in the matrix construction of the infinitival clause.

Non-Finite Clauses Functioning as Adjunct

One construction falls between the determined and non-determined constructions, interpretable as either. That is the case of non-finite clauses functioning as, or within, certain kinds of adjunct, especially those that are positioned at the beginning of the matrix clause:

[5] Having read the report, Mary was sure there had been a miscarriage of justice.

Having read the report is an adjunct in the clause (a supplement, in fact: it could be shifted to after the subject, yielding *Mary, having read the report, was sure there had been a miscarriage of justice* (see [Chapter 8](#)). The predicand that it needs is retrievable by looking at the subject of the matrix clause. It provides a plausible subject, and there is no other candidate, so we take [5] to be saying that it was Mary who read the report.

But users of English don’t always ensure that the predicand in this construction is derivable from the matrix subject. The reader or addressee may have to look elsewhere to arrive at the intended interpretation. Such cases nearly always receive attention in works on English usage, where they are often called ‘dangling participles’ (though they aren’t always participial) or ‘dangling modifiers’ (though they actually tend to be supplements, as we noted above with regard to [5]). There are two types to consider:

- the predicand may be derivable from some entity previously introduced in the discourse; or
- the predicand may be understood as a participant in the speech act.

In both cases, the predicand may also appear somewhere in the matrix clause, but this is not a requirement.

Predicand Derivable from Something in the Discourse The examples in [6] and [7] were found in printed sources (we add the symbol “%” to signal that not every speaker of Standard English would find them acceptable – there is a lot of variation in the way people react to such cases):

- [6] *Jennifer Lopez stars as Marisa, a maid in a fancy New York City Hotel.*
 %*While trying on a wealthy woman’s dress, a handsome and rich politician*
 mistakes her for a society woman.
- [7] %*Being desperately poor, paper was always scarce – as was ink.*

- Example [6] came from a description of the plot of the 2002 film ‘Maid in Manhattan’ in a cinema’s publicity leaflet. When we encounter the adjunct *while trying on a wealthy woman’s dress*, we immediately assume that Marisa was the one trying on the dress, as that character is the topic of the previous sentence, and highly salient. But then the matrix clause subject, *a handsome and rich politician*, provides an unintendedly distracting possible alternative: that the handsome politician was trying on the dress. The result is a momentary uncertainty about whether we assumed the right predicand. (Marisa is actually referred to by the object pronoun *her* in the matrix clause, but this has no impact on the interpretation: the two possible meanings would arise just the same if the matrix clause were *a handsome and rich politician comes into the room*.)
- Example [7] appeared in a review of a biography of the poet John Clare, son of an agricultural labourer. Again, we look to the discourse topic to understand the adjunct: it’s the poet who we’re supposed to understand as having been desperately poor. In this case, the matrix clause subject *paper* would make no sense as the predicand of the non-finite clause (assuming *poor* is used to mean “financially impoverished”). This lack of competition means that there is less opportunity for misunderstanding here than in [6], even though Clare is not mentioned anywhere in the matrix clause.

Predicand Understood as a Participant in the Speech Act Sometimes the sentence does not seem to rely on a discourse topic for interpretation.

- [8] *Walking in the park, several new ideas for the story development came to mind.*

Here it is fairly clear that the predicand of the non-finite clause *walking in the park* is the speaker. In the same way that we can use the pronouns *I* or *you* to refer to previously unmentioned participants in the speech act, we can understand adjuncts as predicative of the speaker or the listener without needing to look back to the previous discourse for a topic.

Examples of the sort illustrated in [7] and [8] are not at all rare. Careful writers often try to avoid them, but you'll nonetheless find examples in carefully edited prose. Contrary to what overly rigid usage advice often says, it's not necessarily problematic when the predicand for the adjunct is not found in matrix subject position. However, it can be confusing when there are competitors for the role, or when none of the options seems quite right.

Some expressions of similar structure involve phrases that have become more conventionally established as non-finite clause adjuncts; they do not seem puzzling to interpret and would be allowed by almost any editor:

- [9] i *In the long run, taking everything into account, which is the wisest choice?*
 ii *Considering the recent economic turmoil, these figures are not bad.*
 iii *Speaking of heroes, there's something kind of heroic about this show.*

Usage Controversy Note

Usage manuals and writing teachers invariably disapprove of subjectless non-finite clause adjuncts for which the predicand is not made clear, and frequently assert that (to put it in our terminology) the predicand of a non-finite clause in adjunct function *MUST* be understood to be the referent of the subject of the matrix clause. They regard all cases where that is not true as grammatical errors. But if that were correct, sentences like those in [6], [7], and [8] should occur only sporadically and by accident, and should be baffling to the reader. Instead, they are extremely common even in professionally edited prose, and many people read right past them, understanding them effortlessly.

They're found throughout English literature. In Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, the ghost of Hamlet's father speaks of the common belief about his cause of death, and says: *'Tis given out that, sleeping in mine orchard, a serpent stung me*. The main clause subject is *the serpent*, but it wasn't the serpent who was sleeping in the orchard.

Occasionally these 'dangling modifiers' may have puzzling or hilarious unintended meanings, but in real life such cases are rare (though much cherished by writers of usage books!). It's certainly a good idea to remove unintended ambiguities that could cause momentary puzzlement, but the danger has been somewhat exaggerated. Example [7], for instance, might reasonably be regarded as poor writing, but only because it momentarily puzzles the reader, not because it contains a syntactic error.

In the sentences in [9], no particular predicand is intended for the underlined adjuncts: they could be paraphrased with *one* or *you* or *we* (“when one takes everything into account”; “when you consider the recent turmoil”; “given that we’re speaking of heroes”).

The situation with the predicands of the above adjuncts is significantly different from the situation illustrated in [4i], where we illustrated **syntactic determination**. The predicand of the infinitival in *Ed promised to resign from the board* MUST be interpreted with the subject of the *promise* clause as its antecedent. No one takes it any other way. In examples like those in [6] to [9], on the other hand, though the matrix clause subject may offer a helpful clue to the predicand (as in [6]), there is a wide range of other possibilities for interpretation, of differing degrees of acceptability and plausibility.

14.2.3 Non-Finites with a Subject

When a subject is present in the non-finite clause, its form may differ from that of subjects in finite clauses.

Infinitival Clauses

In *to*-infinitivals, a personal pronoun with distinct nominative and accusative forms always takes the accusative:

- [10] i [For them to refuse her a visa] was quite outrageous.
 ii All I want is [for us to be reunited].

(Some speakers say things like ^{?*}*They’ve arranged for you and I to be picked up at six*, but this is a highly specific fact about people who prefer *I* to *me* after *and*; see §5.8.2.)

Gerund-Participials

Here the facts are more complex. There are various case possibilities for subjects of gerund-participials, but they differ depending on whether the clause is a complement or an adjunct.

Gerund-Participial as Complement In the following examples the clause is complement of the *on* PP:

- [11] i She insisted on [my / me being present at the interview].
 ii She insisted on [her father’s / her father being present at the interview].
 iii She insisted on [there being a counsellor present throughout the interview].

Here, and in most other complement functions, we find both genitive and non-genitive (accusative or plain case) subjects; see §5.9.3. But notice that some NPs,

such as the meaningless ‘dummy’ subject *there* in [iii] (see §16.4) can’t take genitive case at all.

Gerund-Participial as Adjunct When a gerund-participial is in adjunct function, as in [12], genitive subjects are not permitted at all: the choice is between nominative (formal style) and accusative (informal):

- [12] i *She sought advice from Ed, [he being her most experienced colleague].*
 ii *?She sought advice from Ed, [him being her most experienced colleague].*

The reason [ii] is not entirely acceptable is that the accusative case choice is informal but the gerund-participial adjunct construction itself has a literary or formal quality, so there’s a slight style clash.

14.2.4 Hollow Non-Finite Clauses

Most non-finite clauses have no subject, and one type has a missing non-subject NP, the semantic content of which is recoverable from an antecedent phrase. Some examples are given in [13], where we’ve put brackets round the non-finite clause, and as before we use ‘___’ to mark the gap where the missing non-subject inside it would have been. We also underline the antecedent that provides an interpretation for it.

- [13] i *The house will be ready [for you to inspect ___] in a few days.*
 ii *The new car took me quite a long time [to get used to ___] last week.*
 iii *The committee report was far too long [to read ___ in one evening].*
 iv *They came up with a rather difficult argument [to refute ___].*
 v *Her new book is definitely worth [looking at ___] when you have time.*

In [i], what you’ll be inspecting is the house; in [ii], what I was getting used to last week was the new car; in [iii], what would have taken too long to read was the committee report; in [iv], what was difficult to refute was the argument; in [v], what is worth looking at is her new book.

The bracketed clauses here have incomplete structure, independently of lacking a subject: they have a hole inside where some non-subject NP would have been expected. We’ll call them **hollow** non-finites (our term, not a standard one). These are the properties they share:

- In form they’re mostly *to*-infinitivals.
- The function of the missing NP is normally direct object (in [i], [iii–iv]) or object of a PP (in [ii], [v]).
- The antecedent is normally an NP (often the matrix subject, as in [i–iii] and [v]), or the head of the NP in which the hollow clause is embedded, as in [iv], where *refute* is interpreted as if it had an object denoting the argument alluded to.
- The hollow clause itself can have a number of different functions:

- In [i], it's a complement in an AdjP, licensed by *ready* (adjectives like *good*, *bad*, and *nice* also allow this).
- In [ii], it's a complement in a VP, licensed by the verb *take* when it occurs with a duration expression.
- In [iii], it's an indirect complement licensed by *too* (*enough* and *sufficient* or *sufficiently* also allow this).
- In [iv], it's a complement within an NP, licensed by the attributive modifier *difficult*. (*Easy*, *hard*, *simple*, *tough*, and a few other adjectives also allow this.)
- In [v], where the hollow clause is a gerund-participial, it's a complement in an AdjP, licensed by the adjective *worth*.

14.3 The Functions of Non-Finite Clauses

Non-finite clauses appear in a very wide range of functions, but there are major differences between the four types. We'll look at them separately in turn: *to*-infinitivals in §14.3.1, bare infinitivals in §14.3.2, gerund-participials in §14.3.3, and past-participials in §14.3.4.

14.3.1 *To*-Infinitivals

To-infinitivals appear in many constructions, functioning as complements or adjuncts:

[14]	i	SUBJECT	<i>To turn back now would be a mistake.</i>
	ii	EXTRAPOSED SUBJECT	<i>It would be a mistake <u>to turn back now</u>.</i>
	iii	EXTRAPOSED OBJECT	<i>We considered it sensible <u>to take legal advice</u>.</i>
	iv	COMP IN VP	<i>I [hope <u>to convince them of my innocence</u>].</i>
	v	COMP IN PP	<i>I go to the gym [in order <u>to keep fit</u>].</i>
	vi	ADJUNCT IN CLAUSE	<i>I go to the gym <u>to keep fit</u>.</i>
	vii	COMP IN NOMINAL	<i>It provides an [opportunity <u>to broaden the mind</u>].</i>
	viii	MODIFIER IN NOMINAL	<i>We found a [big box <u>in which to keep them</u>].</i>
	ix	MODIFIER IN NOMINAL	<i>We found a [big box <u>to keep them in</u>].</i>
	x	COMP IN ADJP	<i>He was [anxious <u>to make a good impression</u>].</i>
	xi	INDIRECT COMP	<i>The twins are still [too young <u>to be left alone</u>].</i>

- As with finite content clauses, the construction with the infinitival as subject, as in [i], is much less common than the one where it is an extraposed subject, as in [ii].
- Construction [iii] has no counterpart without the *it*: the infinitival can't go where the *it* goes (**We considered to take legal advice sensible*). The *it* is clearly the object in the *considered* VP. We analyse the infinitival clause as an **extraposed object** (see §16.3).

- In [iv], the infinitival is an internal complement in the VP (not external like the subject, which is a complement in the clause but outside the VP). This is by far the most common use of *to*-infinitivals.
- Leaving aside infinitival interrogative clauses (which we'll look at immediately below), infinitivals don't generally function as complements in a PP. There is one major exception: the compound preposition *in order* (which of course historically originates in a construction where *order* was a noun), illustrated in [v].
- Infinitivals occur as adjuncts of various kinds; the one in [vi] is a purpose adjunct, with the same meaning as the bracketed PP of [v].
- In [vii–ix] the infinitival is a dependent in NP structure, either a complement (licensed by the noun) or a modifier. Modifier infinitivals are a special case of relative clauses – of the *wh* type in [viii], and the non-*wh* type in [ix]. In the *wh* type the relative phrase in initial position must consist of preposition + NP, and no subject is permitted.
- Infinitival complements are licensed by numerous adjectives, such as *anxious* in [x].
- Finally, in [xi] the infinitival is an **indirect complement** in the structure of an AdjP. It is licensed by *too*, but it functions syntactically as a post-head dependent in the phrase headed by *young* (see §5.4.1).

Infinitival Interrogative Clauses

Infinitivals functioning as complements in VPs, PPs, nominals, and AdjPs can be interrogative – though only if the head licenses one, of course. Some examples are given in [15], with the infinitival underlined and brackets round the phrase within which it has the complement function:

- | | | | |
|------|-----|-----------------|--|
| [15] | i | COMP IN VP | <i>I don't [know <u>whether to accept their offer</u>].</i> |
| | ii | COMP IN AdjP | <i>I'm not [sure <u>how to proceed</u>].</i> |
| | iii | COMP IN PP | <i>They can't agree [on <u>what to do about it</u>].</i> |
| | iv | COMP IN NOMINAL | <i>A [decision <u>whether to go ahead</u>] hasn't been made.</i> |

Closed infinitival interrogatives are introduced by the subordinator *whether* (not the alternate *if* that we find in finite interrogative content clauses) and open ones by an interrogative phrase like *who* or *which one* or *how*. No subject is permitted in either kind of infinitival interrogative clause.

- In [i–iii] the predicand is syntactically determined, with the matrix clause subject as the antecedent.
- In [iv], there is no syntactic determination, and no antecedent: the interpretation will be heavily dependent on the context.

The meaning of infinitival interrogatives is **deontic**: it is as if the modal auxiliary *should* were included. For example, [i] doesn't mean that I don't know whether I do accept their offer, or did accept it; it means I don't know whether I **SHOULD** accept it.

14.3.2 Bare Infinitivals

In contrast to *to*-infinitivals, with their wide range of uses, bare infinitival clauses occur in only a very limited set of functions. They are almost entirely limited to being internal complements licensed by certain verbs, most often modal auxiliaries or the dummy auxiliary *do*, with no subject permitted:

- | | | | |
|------|-----|---|---|
| [16] | i | <i>You [must <u>take legal advice</u>].</i> | [complement licensed by modal auxiliary] |
| | ii | <i>He [didn't <u>read the question</u>].</i> | [complement licensed by auxiliary <i>do</i>] |
| | iii | <i>Can you [help <u>clear up</u>]?</i> | [complement licensed by <i>help</i>] |
| | iv | <i>The devil [made me <u>do it</u>].</i> | [complement licensed by <i>make, let, see</i> , etc.] |
| | v | <i>All I did [was <u>ask a question</u>].</i> | [complement licensed by specifying <i>be</i>] |

14.3.3 Gerund-Participials

The range of functions in which gerund-participial clauses are found is broadly comparable to that of *to*-infinitivals, but there are some important differences. The examples in [17] have the gerund-participial clauses underlined.

- | | | | |
|------|------|----------------------|--|
| [17] | i | SUBJECT | <i><u>Bringing him in on the deal</u> was a great idea.</i> |
| | ii | EXTRAPOSED SUBJECT | <i>It's been a pleasure <u>talking to you both</u>.</i> |
| | iii | OBJECT | <i>I [find <u>supervising Max</u> rather stressful].</i> |
| | iv | EXTRAPOSED OBJECT | <i>He considers it a waste of time <u>going to meetings</u>.</i> |
| | v | COMP IN VP | <i>I didn't [<u>bother answering their letter</u>].</i> |
| | vi | COMP IN PP | <i>He insists [<u>on checking everything himself</u>].</i> |
| | vii | SUPPLEMENT IN CLAUSE | <i><u>Having read the paper</u>, I can't see why you care.</i> |
| | viii | MODIFIER IN NOM | <i>Who was the [<u>doctor performing the operation</u>]?</i> |

- We have seen that with *to*-infinitivals there is a strong preference for extraposition rather than having the non-finite clause in subject position, but this is not the case with gerund-participials: see §§16.3 and 16.7.
- Unlike infinitivals, gerund-participials can occur as objects with a following predicative complement, as in [iii] – infinitivals allow only the extraposed object construction illustrated in [14iii]. (An object is a special case of an internal complement: see §4.1. Objects are almost always NPs, but gerund-participial clauses seem to be an exception.)
- Similarly, while prepositions generally don't accept *to*-infinitivals as complement, many can license gerund-participials, as *on* does in [vi].
- In NP structure, gerund-participials are often modifiers meaning the same as finite relative clauses with progressive aspect (as in *The doctor who was performing the operation*). But not always: there is no progressive meaning in *People owning more than one house pay more tax*, where the gerund-participial is equivalent to *who own more than one house*. The fact that English only has

a single gerund-participial form (no separate forms for ‘present participle’ and ‘gerund’ like Latin) means that the distinction between progressive and non-progressive can’t show up in gerund-participial clauses.

- Gerund-participials do not function as complements in the structure of NPs or (with one or two exceptions) AdjPs; instead we find preposition + gerund participial complements (*the fear of dying; afraid of offending them*). In a sentence like *I was safe indoors, watching you prune the tree*, the underlined clause is an adjunct in clause structure, meaning “while I was watching you prune the tree” – it’s not a complement licensed by *safe* or *indoors*.

14.3.4 Past-Participials

Past-participial clauses have a quite limited distribution. They are pretty much restricted to the three functions shown in [18]:

[18]	i	COMP IN VP	{	<i>She [has <u>written another novel</u>].</i>
	ii			<i>I could [have you <u>dismissed on the spot</u>].</i>
	iii	MODIFIER IN Nom		<i>The [guns <u>stolen in the break-in</u>] were recovered.</i>
	iv	SUPPLEMENT		<i>[Brought up in Glasgow], he emigrated to L.A.</i>

- As a complement in a VP, the past-participial may have a perfect or passive interpretation – perfect as a complement licensed by the perfect auxiliary *have*, as in [i], and otherwise passive, as in [ii].
- As modifier, a past-participial clause is interpreted as passive: the underlined non-finite clause in [iii] is essentially equivalent to the finite relative clause *which were stolen in the break-in*.
- The past-participial clause in [iv] is a supplement anchored to the subject.

14.4 Transparent Verbs and Raised Subjects

There is a very important distinction between two kinds of intransitive verbs taking infinitival complements: they may be **ordinary** or **transparent**. At first glance they look exactly the same, as you can see in [19], where the verbs we are concerned with are underlined.

[19]	ORDINARY VERB		TRANSPARENT VERB	
	a.	<i>Al <u>wanted</u> to like Ed.</i>	b.	<i>Al <u>appeared</u> to like Ed.</i>

But there is a radical difference between the two kinds, with both syntactic and semantic consequences.

- An ordinary intransitive verb has a direct semantic relationship with the subject of its clause. In [19a] the main clause subject *Al* refers to a person experiencing a desire (wanting to find Ed likable) – exactly as you would expect for a subject and a verb.
- A transparent intransitive verb, by contrast, has no semantic relationship with the subject of its clause. Instead, its subject is the predicand of the embedded non-finite clause that follows. It's as if the intervening verb were merely some kind of modifier – as if it were transparent to the subject-verb semantic relation. The meaning of [19b] is very close to that of *Al apparently liked Ed*, where the adverb *apparently* modifies the *like* VP.

In both cases the infinitival clauses find their predicand in the subject of the matrix clause, but here the head verb of the matrix clause doesn't share the predicand. Instead, it has no predicand at all. The [a] example is saying something that's intrinsically about *Al* (that he wanted something), but [b] is not specifically commenting on *Al*'s behaviour it's just saying that a friendly relationship appeared to hold between him and Ed.

Linguists discussing this distinction generally talk about 'raising': they say that *Al* in [b] is a 'raised' subject, meaning that it's as if the NP *Al* were really the subject in the *like* clause, but in the actual order of words it is 'raised' out of that clause to assume the subject role in the *appeared* clause. The difference doesn't actually lie in types of subject, but in types of verb. Nonetheless, keep this metaphor of 'raising' in mind, because we return to it later.

The radical difference in the semantic relations in [a] and [b] is reflected in a number of ways. These contrasts enable us to devise tests to determine whether a given verb is ordinary like *want* or transparent like *appear*. We'll consider just two here: the effect of making the non-finite clause *passive*, and the effect of selecting a *dummy pronoun* as subject.

14.4.1 Tests for Ordinary and Transparent Verbs

Passive Infinitivals

Compare first the effect on the meaning of the examples in [19] if we make the non-finite clause *passive* and make *Bob* the subject in the matrix clause, with *Al* appearing as the complement in a *by* PP. The first line of the examples in [20] repeats those of [19], while the second line results from making the changes just described.

[20]	ORDINARY VERB	TRANSPARENT VERB	
i	a. <i>Al <u>wanted</u> to impress Bob.</i>	b. <i>Al <u>appeared</u> to impress Bob.</i>	ACTIVE INFINITIVAL
ii	a. <i><u>Bob</u> wanted to be impressed by Al.</i>	b. <i><u>Bob</u> appeared to be impressed by Al.</i>	PASSIVE INFINITIVAL

Consider whether or not there is a change in the core meaning – the conditions that make a statement true or false. Specifically, consider whether the active version could be true and the passive version false.

- First take the examples with *want*. Try to imagine a situation in which Al wants to impress Bob while Bob doesn't want to be impressed by Al. This is fairly easy: Al hopes to do well at interview, but Bob wants to hire someone else, so he's hoping Al looks unimpressive. The two *want* examples in [20], [ia] and [iia], don't have the same core meaning. That's because *want* in the [a] examples is an **ordinary** verb, with a direct semantic relation to its VP. If *Al* is subject, we're talking about what Al wanted; if *Bob* is subject, we're discussing Bob's wishes.
- Now ask whether there could be a situation where Al appears to impress Bob but Bob doesn't appear to be impressed by Al. The answer must be no. You simply can't invent a situation where it's apparent that Al impresses Bob but it's also apparent that Bob is not impressed by Al. That's the sign of a **transparent** verb. Replacing *Al* by *Bob* doesn't change the core meaning because there's no direct semantic relation between *Al* and *appeared*. The NP *Al* makes its contribution as predicand of the *impress* VP, not of the *appear* VP.

This gives us a test for determining whether a given verb with an infinitival complement takes an ordinary or a raised subject. Put it in a pair of sentences differing in the way shown in [20], and:

- if they differ in core meaning, the verb is ordinary, like *want*;
- if they have the same core meaning, the verb is transparent, like *appear*.

Of course, sometimes the passive version may sound a bit unnatural. In [21] the passive version [b] sounds distinctly odd:

- [21] i *The doctor began to amputate the limb.*
 ii [?]*The limb began to be amputated by the doctor.*

It's true that [ii] sounds very strange; it's not anything that a person would say. But it still doesn't express anything that could be false if [i] were true. It's just that a skilled surgeon is such an obvious choice of subject for a sentence about a person initiating an operation, and the passive version has nothing to commend it: [ii] makes it sound as if the sentence is mainly about the limb rather than the doctor's actions, which is surely not how most people would see it. But it is not hard to think of examples with *begin* where the version with the passive infinitival clause is just as natural as with the active:

- [22] i a. *Max's crude jokes began to offend the audience.*
 b. *The audience began to be offended by Max's crude jokes.*
 ii a. *Strange sounds began to fill the room.*
 b. *The room began to be filled with strange sounds.*

In these examples it is much easier to see that the [a] and [b] versions are equivalent. This experiment reveals that *begin* is a transparent verb: its subject is the predicand of the subordinate VP, not of the VP in its own clause. The meaning of *begin* applies to the situation described in the subordinate clause. So in [i], what began was the process of Max's crudeness gradually turning the audience off; and in [ii], what began was the emergence in the room of steadily increasing strange noises.

Dummy Pronouns as Subject

A **dummy** element is one that has no independent meaning of its own but occurs in certain constructions simply to satisfy some syntactic requirement.

An example we have referred to on quite a few occasions is the dummy auxiliary verb *do*. In interrogatives like *Do they want it?* and negatives like *They don't want it*, dummy *do* occurs when it satisfies the requirement for the presence of an auxiliary verb (even though there is no auxiliary in the corresponding **canonical** construction *They want it*; see §3.2.1).

There are also two dummy elements belonging to the category of **pronoun**, namely *it* and *there*, as used, for example, in the following constructions:

- [23] i EXTRAPOSITION *It* is likely that she'll retire.
 ii EXISTENTIAL *There* is plenty of time.

These are non-canonical constructions with special information-packaging properties, discussed in some detail in Chapter 16. *It* and *there* here are dummy elements that appear in cases where the requirement that non-imperative finite clauses must contain a subject is not otherwise met, but the VP in question doesn't call for a predicand.

- The canonical version of [i] is *That she'll retire is likely*; extraposition places the subordinate clause at the end of the matrix and inserts dummy *it* to fill the vacated subject position.
- The existential clause [ii] has no canonical counterpart. You can't say **Plenty of time is* because the verb *be* normally requires an internal complement. To express the meaning grammatically we can move *plenty of time* to internal complement position with the vacated subject position being again filled by a dummy, this time *there*.

The significance of these dummy pronouns for the concerns of this chapter is that they cannot appear with ordinary verbs, only with transparent ones. The following table illustrates this:

ORDINARY VERB		TRANSPARENT VERB	
i	a. <i>*<u>It</u> longs to be likely that she'll retire.</i>	b. <i><u>It</u> seems to be likely that she'll retire.</i>	EXTRAPOSITION <i>it</i>
ii	a. <i>*<u>There</u> longs to be plenty of time.</i>	b. <i><u>There</u> seems to be plenty of time.</i>	EXISTENTIAL <i>there</i>

An ordinary subject is semantically related to the verb of its clause, but a dummy subject can't be, because it has no semantic properties. However, a dummy pronoun can occur as the subject of a transparent verb, provided the non-finite complement is of the right sort. That condition is met in the cases with the transparent verb in [24b]: the infinitival clauses are of the right sort: *be likely that she'll retire* goes with *it*, and *be plenty of time* goes with *there*, as the examples in [23] show.

Consider one more pair of verbs, *forget* and obligational *have*. We can use a single table to display the data from both experiments – the passive test (where we'll drop the *by* PP for brevity) and the dummy test (where we just use *there*):

[25]	ORDINARY VERB	TRANSPARENT VERB
i a.	<i>The boss forgot to sign the form.</i>	b. <i>The boss had to sign the form.</i>
ii a.	<i>*The form forgot to be signed.</i> (different core meaning from [ia])	b. <i>The form had to be signed.</i> (same core meaning as [ib])
iii a.	<i>*There forgot to be a recount.</i> (dummy pronoun not OK)	b. <i>There had to be a recount.</i> (dummy pronoun OK)

The passive version in [iia] is completely nonsensical, since inanimate things like documents can't forget – but that fact shows clearly that it doesn't have the same core meaning as the perfectly sensible [ia]. In [iii] the subordinate clause is the infinitival counterpart of *There was a recount*: the subject *there* can appear as the matrix clause subject (see §11.1, on clauses of this sort), as seen in [iiib], but it cannot function as an ordinary subject to *forget* ([iiia]), because that's an ordinary verb that requires a person or at least an animate subject.

Verbs with Gerund-Participial Complements

The examples of transparent verbs so far have taken infinitival complements. But the distinction between the two kinds of verb is also found with gerund-participials. *Regret*, for example, is an ordinary verb, while *keep* is a transparent verb. This can be shown by means of the same two tests as we have used above, and the results of the experiment presented in one table:

[26]	ORDINARY VERB	TRANSPARENT VERB
i a.	<i>Don regretted criticizing Joe.</i>	b. <i>Don kept criticizing Joe.</i>
ii a.	<i>Joe regretted being criticized by Don.</i> (different core meaning)	b. <i>Joe kept being criticized by Don.</i> (same core meaning)
iii a.	<i>*There regret being delays.</i> (dummy pronoun not OK)	b. <i>There keep being delays.</i> (dummy pronoun allowed)

- The examples in [i–ii] involve the passivization test. It's clear that [ia] and [iia] differ in truth conditions, for the first attributes regret to Don, the second to Joe. But [ib] and [iib] are equivalent. Both say that the situation of Don interrupting Joe occurred repeatedly: there's no direct semantic relation between *keep* and the subject.

- The dummy pronoun test gives the same results. *Keep* can take a dummy subject, but *regret* cannot.

Auxiliary Verbs

The modal, perfect, progressive, and passive auxiliaries are almost all transparent verbs, with just one exception: the modal use of *dare*, as seen in examples like *I daren't be seen in public with him anymore*, is not transparent. We can see this, and verify that *may* is a transparent verb, from examples such as the following:

[27]	ORDINARY VERB	TRANSPARENT VERB
i a.	<i>Pat <u>daren't</u> outshine Sue.</i>	b. <i>Pat <u>may</u> outshine Sue.</i>
ii a.	<i>Sue <u>daren't</u> be outshone by Pat.</i> (different core meaning)	b. <i>Sue <u>may</u> be outshone by Pat.</i> (same core meaning)
iii a.	<i>*There <u>daren't</u> be a recording of it.</i> (dummy pronoun not OK)	b. <i>There <u>may</u> be a recording of it.</i> (dummy pronoun allowed)

Example [ia] is about what Pat can't risk doing, while [iia] is about what Sue can face; that establishes that *dare* is not transparent. *May* is, however, so [ib] and [iib] are synonymous, and [iiib] is grammatical. And, again, the dummy pronoun test gives the same results. *May* can take a dummy subject, but *dare* can't.

14.4.2 Objects and Internal Complement Clauses

The verbs that occur with an infinitival internal complement with an NP predicand preceding it are of four kinds:

- [28] i *They arranged [for Lisa to be at the staff meeting].*
 ii *They counted on Lisa [to be at the staff meeting].*
 iii *They persuaded Lisa [to be at the staff meeting].*
 iv *They assumed Lisa [to be at the staff meeting].*

- In [i], the infinitival clause is marked by the subordinator *for*. The NP *Lisa* is clearly the subject in the embedded clause; its only semantic role is as person who, under the arrangement, would be at the meeting.
- In [ii], the PP *on Lisa* is a complement licensed by the prepositional verb *count*. This PP, along with its complement *Lisa* – an NP which could be interpreted as the subject of *be at the meeting* – is clearly in the matrix clause both syntactically and semantically; but *Lisa* is also semantically the predicand of the infinitival clause. So, *Lisa* here is associated with two semantic roles: firstly, complement of the *on* PP, identifying the person they were counting on; and secondly, predicand of the infinitival, identifying the person who was to be present at the meeting.

- In [iii], we have an object of the matrix VP, but it is also the predicand of the infinitival. Again, *Lisa* is associated with two semantic roles: as matrix object specifying the person they persuaded, and as predicand of the infinitival, identifying the person who was to be present at the meeting.
- In [iv], however, the object of *assumed* has only one semantic role – as the person who, under their assumption, was at the meeting. To put it intuitively, you can't assume a person: assumption applies to propositions. They were assuming they were in a certain situation – the situation describable by saying 'Lisa is at the meeting'. The sentence has essentially the same meaning as *They assumed that Lisa was at the meeting*, where it is completely clear that *Lisa* is associated with just one semantic role, that of being a staff meeting attendee. Nevertheless, as far as the SYNTAX is concerned – and as indicated by our bracketing – *Lisa* functions as the object of the matrix VP in [iv] just as it does in [iii].

We're positing a syntax for [iv] that doesn't directly match its meaning: we are claiming that *Lisa* belongs syntactically to the matrix clause (as object) although its only semantic role relates to the subordinate clause (as predicand). We need to provide evidence in support of this syntactic analysis – evidence that the element following *assume* and preceding the infinitival really does function as the object of the matrix VP. We'll do that next, and then we'll return to the difference between construction [iii], with *persuade*, and construction [iv], with *assume*. It'll become clear that there is an analogy with what we saw in [19]: in addition to classes of verbs distinguished by ordinary vs raised SUBJECTS, there are classes of verbs distinguished by ordinary vs raised OBJECTS.

Evidence for Object Function

The distinction between [28i] (*They arranged [for Lisa to be at the staff meeting]*) and [28iii] (*They persuaded Lisa to be at the staff meeting*) is clear and sharp: in the former, *Lisa* is subject in the subordinate clause, whereas in the latter it is object in the matrix clause and merely predicand in the subordinate clause. This is reflected in the possibilities for syntactic modification. And what we find is that in construction [28iv] (*They assumed Lisa to be at the staff meeting*) *assume* behaves like *persuade*, not *arrange*. We'll test that claim with three such modifications: placement of adjuncts, the so-called pseudo-cleft construction, and passivization of the matrix clause.

Placement of Adjuncts It is possible to insert an AdvP adjunct immediately after *arrange* but not after *persuade* or *assume*:

- [29] i *They arranged only recently for Lisa to be present at the meeting.*
 ii **They persuaded only recently Lisa to be present at the meeting.*
 iii **They assumed only recently Lisa to be present at the meeting.*

There is a general constraint in English that you can't place such an adjunct between a verb and its object, as we saw in §1.4, example [8]: **This wall protected obviously the city*. (Long or complex objects are exceptional; their special option of being at the end of the VP is discussed in §16.8.) The ungrammaticality of [29ii] is due to the violation of this constraint: we have inserted *only recently* between the verb *persuade* and what is uncontroversially its object. The fact that [iii] is ungrammatical too shows that *Lisa* is treated as the object of the *assumed* VP; [29i], on the other hand, is perfectly grammatical because the non-finite clause *for Lisa to be at the staff meeting* is not the object of the *arranged* VP.

The 'Pseudo-Cleft' Construction Compare next the examples in [30]:

- [30] i *What they arranged was for Lisa to be at the staff meeting.*
 ii **What they persuaded was Lisa to be at the staff meeting.*
 iii **What they assumed was Lisa to be at the staff meeting.*

The 'pseudo-cleft' is another construction belonging to the information packaging domain; the main discussion of it is in §16.6. For present purposes it is sufficient to see in broad outline how [30i] differs from the structurally more elementary [28i]. The former has been divided into two parts (as reflected in the 'cleft' component of the name). One part (*for Lisa to be present at the meeting*) is made complement of the *be* VP, while the other (*they arranged*) is contained within the subject, which has the form of a fused relative beginning with the relative pronoun *what* (see §12.4 for this type of relative construction). The information expressed in the fused relative is backgrounded, taken for granted, while that expressed in the complement of the *be* VP is foregrounded or highlighted.

For present purposes the important syntactic property of this construction is that the complement of the *be* VP must be a SINGLE CONSTITUENT in the corresponding non-cleft clause. This can be illustrated by means of the following examples:

- [31] i *He lent a preliminary draft of my thesis to his housemate.*
 ii *What he lent to his housemate was a preliminary draft of my thesis.*
 iii **What he lent was a preliminary draft of my thesis to his housemate.*

The underlined sequence in [i] forms a constituent – it is an NP functioning as an object – and this can be foregrounded by making it the complement in the pseudo-cleft [ii]. But *a preliminary draft of my thesis to his housemate* is not a constituent in [i] – it is an NP followed by a PP – and hence this cannot be made complement of the *be* VP in a pseudo-cleft: [iii] is very clearly ungrammatical.

This explains the data in [30]. *For Lisa to be at the staff meeting* is a constituent in [29i] (it is a non-finite clause complement), so it can be foregrounded in the pseudo-cleft [30i]. *Lisa to be at the staff meeting* in [29ii], by contrast, is not a constituent (it is an NP functioning as an object followed by a non-finite clause functioning as

a complement), and so it can't be foregrounded in a pseudo-cleft: [30ii] is clearly ungrammatical. The ungrammaticality of the *assume* example [30iii] shows that *Lisa to be at the staff meeting* likewise can't be a constituent in [29iii]: here again, then, *Lisa* behaves syntactically as an object of the matrix VP, not the subject of the subordinate clause, even though it is SEMANTICALLY part of the subordinate clause.

Passivization of the Matrix Clause Consider next the pairs shown in [32] and [33]:

- [32] i *They persuaded Lisa to be at the staff meeting.*
 ii *Lisa was persuaded to be at the staff meeting.*
- [33] i *They assumed Lisa to be at the staff meeting.*
 ii *Lisa was assumed to be at the staff meeting.*

In [32], example [ii] is a passive version of the active clause [i] – more specifically, it is a 'short passive', one without the *by*-phrase (*by them*) that occurs in 'long passives'. Again, the difference between active and passive clauses is a matter of information packaging, and it is accordingly dealt with in detail in Chapter 16 (see §16.2). For present purposes, the important point is that the subject of the passive in [ii], *Lisa*, corresponds to the OBJECT of the active. And what we see from [33] is that *assume* behaves just like *persuade* with respect to passivization: the difference between [i] and [ii] is the same in the two pairs. This shows that *Lisa* in [33i] is treated syntactically as the object of the *assumed* VP, just as it is in [33ii]. (By contrast, in [28i] – *They arranged for Lisa to be at the staff meeting* – the NP *Lisa* is subject of the infinitival, not object of the matrix clause VP, and hence cannot become subject of a corresponding passive: **Lisa was arranged for to be at the staff meeting.*)

A minor distractor here is that some verbs exceptionally disallow passivization despite having an object: we get *Bob lacks tact* but not **Tact is lacked by Bob*; *Sue has two brothers* but not **Two brothers are had by Sue*. *Want* is one of these, so corresponding to *I want you to enjoy your birthday* we don't find a passive **You are wanted to enjoy your birthday*. But the inapplicability of this test is not crucial: the adjunct insertion and pseudo-cleft tests suffice to show that *you* is an object in the matrix clause: note **I want very much you to enjoy your birthday* and **What I want is you to enjoy your birthday*.

The Distinction between Ordinary and Raised Objects

We have now confirmed that [28iii], with *persuade*, and [28iv], with *assume*, are ALIKE in having the NP that follows them as an object of the matrix. We now turn to the way in which they are DIFFERENT: *persuade* takes an ordinary object whereas *assume* takes what we'll call a raised object. Again, the distinction really lies in the matrix verb. An ordinary object is related semantically to the matrix clause verb, whereas a raised object is not – it belongs semantically to the subordinate clause.

The tests that we used to distinguish between ordinary and raised subjects can be adapted so as to apply to the distinction between ordinary and raised objects. The following pairs of active and passive non-finite clauses, with *get* as the verb taking an ordinary object and *expect* taking a raised subject, parallel those shown in [20]:

[34]		ORDINARY OBJECT	RAISED OBJECT
	ACTIVE NON-FINITE	<i>We got <u>a specialist</u> to examine Dana.</i>	<i>We expected <u>a specialist</u> to examine Dana.</i>
	PASSIVE NON-FINITE	<i>We got <u>Dana</u> to be examined by a specialist.</i>	<i>We expected <u>Dana</u> to be examined by a specialist.</i>

In [20] the passivization test involved interchanging the object of the non-finite clause with the SUBJECT of the matrix, whereas in [34] we interchange the object of the non-finite clause with the OBJECT of the matrix. With *get* (like *persuade*) this operation changes what we could call the **core meaning** – the component of meaning that determines what situation the clause could describe. It's a situation where we are getting a specialist to agree to do the examination in the first case, but it's about persuading Dana to undergo it in the second. But with *expect* (as before with *assume*) there is no change to the core meaning: the truth conditions stay the same. In both cases what we expected was the same thing: an examination of Dana, conducted by a specialist.

Similarly, we can adapt the dummy pronoun test by asking whether such a pronoun can occur as an object of the matrix clause VP. The experiments in [35] are analogous to the ones in [24] above:

[35]	ORDINARY OBJECT	RAISED OBJECT	
	i a. * <i>We got <u>it</u> to be clear that she was right.</i>	b. <i>We expected <u>it</u> to be clear that she was right.</i>	EXTRAPOSITION <i>it</i>
	ii a. * <i>We got <u>there</u> to be an adult present.</i>	b. <i>We expected <u>there</u> to be an adult present.</i>	EXISTENTIAL <i>there</i>

The *get* examples are inadmissible because the semantically empty *it* and *there* cannot enter into a semantic relation with this verb: they cannot identify who we managed to influence. The *expect* examples, on the other hand, are perfectly normal because there is no semantic relation between the pronoun and the preceding verb: what we expected was that it would be clear that she was right and that there would be an adult present.

Transitive Verbs with Gerund-Participial Complements

The construction with gerund-participials differs significantly from that with *to*-infinitivals in a number of respects, and in certain cases the structure is not so clear. We begin with analogues of the first three *to*-infinitival constructions illustrated in [28]. Here the analysis is unproblematic:

- [36] i a. *He resented [their being given special privileges].*
 b. *He resented [them being given special privileges].*
 ii a. *We hadn't counted on [his being so insensitive].*
 b. *We hadn't counted on [him being so insensitive].*
 iii *We caught him [mistreating the cat].*

- In [ia] the subordination of the non-finite clause is marked by the genitive inflection, rather than the subordinator *for* used in *to*-infinitivals. Dependent genitive pronouns like *their* can never function as object, and it is quite clear here that *their* is subject of the gerund-participial clause.
- It is not immediately so obvious that *them* in [ib] belongs in the subordinate clause, but our pseudo-cleft test illustrated in [30] provides evidence that it does, for we can say *What he resented was them being given special privileges*. The difference between [ia] and [ib] is just like the one in *The prospect of [their / them being given special privileges] distressed him*, where the bracketed constituent is clearly a clause functioning as a complement within the PP headed by *of* (which in turn is a complement within the subject NP). That is, we just have a case distinction in the subject between the more formal genitive and the less formal accusative (cf. §14.2.3).
- In [ii], we have examples containing the prepositional verb *count* for comparison with [28ii]. The structure here, however, is quite different from that of [28ii]: the non-finite clause is not an internal complement of the VP but a complement of the *on* PP. The genitive *his* in [36iia] is again clearly the subject of the gerund-participial, not itself the complement of the *on* PP. And there is likewise no reason to suggest that the constituent structure of [36iib] is any different, because again we can say *What we hadn't counted on was his / him being so insensitive*. So here too we just have a case distinction in the subject NP between the genitive and the accusative (the genitive being a bit more formal).
- In example [36iii], *him* is an ordinary object in the matrix clause (and predicand of the gerund-participial). This can be shown by the familiar tests. For example, the sentence does not have the same core meaning as the rather strange [?]*We caught the cat being mistreated by him*, and the matrix object NP can't be a dummy pronoun: **We caught there being a riot*. Other verbs that fit this pattern include *discover*, *find*, *keep*, and *leave*.

With this last group the matrix object NP understood cannot be a dependent genitive: we cannot replace *him* by *his* in [36iii]. However, not all examples where a genitive is excluded are like [36iii] in having an ordinary object in the matrix clause. Take the verb *see*, for example. This can be used with the sense “imagine” as well as with the more common sense of visual perception, as in [37i–ii] respectively, and in neither can we replace *him* by genitive *his*, but in neither is *him* an ordinary object of the *see* VP:

- [37] i *I can't see him finishing the job today.*
 ii *I saw him mistreating the cat.*

- For [i], we have very strong evidence that *him* is not an ordinary matrix object, for this construction allows dummy pronouns, as in *I can't see there being any decision on this matter before the election*. Moreover, the relevant NP can't be made subject of a passive counterpart of the matrix (**He can't be seen finishing the job today*), so it is probably best to treat it as the subject of the gerund-participial, with the same sort of structure as [36ib].
- In [ii], however, the NP *him* can be the subject of a counterpart with a passive matrix: *He was seen mistreating the cat*. Here, then, it is syntactically a constituent of the matrix clause. But there is evidence that it is a raised object, not an ordinary one. In the first place, [ii] has the same core meaning as *I saw the cat being mistreated by him*. And, secondly, it is possible, though unusual, to have a dummy NP in this construction: *I've never seen it snow in May before*. This raised object analysis likewise seems appropriate for other sensory perception verbs such as *feel* and *hear*.

Summary

We've seen that there is a distinction between subjects of **ordinary** verbs licensing non-finite complements, where we find the normal semantic relations between subjects and verbs, and verbs that are apparently **transparent** to semantic relations, so that their subjects relate solely to the non-finite complement clause. Their subjects act as if they had been **raised** out of that clause. Verbs like *hope* and *intend* are normal verbs; verbs like *appear* and *seem* are transparent verbs. In consequence, **There intends to be a storm coming* is ungrammatical: *intend* is a normal verb, and dummy *there* isn't a suitable subject for it. But *There seems to be a storm coming* is grammatical, because the transparent verb *seem* places no restrictions on what can be its subject: that subject only has to be compatible with the infinitival complement clause.

There is also a distinction between normal transitive verbs that license objects followed by infinitival complements, with the normal semantic relations between verb and object, and verbs having objects that act as if they belonged solely to the following non-finite complement clause. Verbs like *get* and *persuade* are normal transitive verbs, taking objects to which they relate semantically; verbs like *assume* and *expect* are not: they definitely take objects, but those objects act as if **raised**: their semantic role is solely as predicand for the following infinitival complement clause. In consequence, **They persuaded there to be a storm* is ungrammatical: dummy *there* is not a suitable object for a normal verb like *persuade*. Yet *They expected there to be a storm* is grammatical, because *expect* takes a **raised** object: it places no restriction on its object other than that it should be suitable as a subject for the following infinitival complement clause.

14.5 Verbless Clauses

Verbless clauses such as [1v], *Me a novelist!* differ even more radically in structure from canonical clauses than do other non-finites: instead of merely failing to express primary tense or to allow for the marking of modality by means of modal auxiliaries, the verb we would have expected is missing altogether. They have a much more restricted distribution than non-finites. They are found only in adjunct PPs or serving directly as adjuncts. (We are setting aside cases where verbs are omitted in coordinative constructions, as in *The road crew arrived on Tuesday and the band __ the day after*; for these, see §15.8.2.)

14.5.1 Verbless Clauses as Complement of a PP

There aren't any prepositions that license *ONLY* a verbless complement clause, but *with* and *without* allow both non-finite and verbless clauses. A few others – such as *although*, *if*, *once*, and *while* – accept three kinds of clauses: finite, non-finite, and verbless. All this is illustrated in [38], where the PP is bracketed and the clause complement is underlined.

- [38]
- | | | | |
|-----|----|--|---------------|
| i | a. | <i>He'd been there</i> [PP <i>without</i> <u><i>anyone noticing him</i></u>]. | [participial] |
| | b. | <i>He was sunbathing</i> [PP <i>without</i> <u><i>any sunscreen on</i></u>]. | [verbless] |
| ii | a. | [PP <i>While</i> <u><i>I was working in Rome</i></u>] <i>I lived with them.</i> | [finite] |
| | b. | [PP <i>While</i> <u><i>working in Rome</i></u>] <i>I lived with them.</i> | [participial] |
| | c. | [PP <i>While</i> <u><i>in Rome</i></u>] <i>I lived with them.</i> | [verbless] |
| iii | a. | <i>Just imagine</i> – <u><i>our son being a doctor!</i></u> | [participial] |
| | b. | <i>Just imagine</i> – <u><i>our son a doctor!</i></u> | [verbless] |

- In [ib], *any sunscreen* is the subject and *on* is the predicate, consisting of the locative complement *on*. The relation is like that expressed in finite clauses headed by *be* (cf. *There wasn't any sunscreen on him*), though it would not be possible to insert *be* in [ib] itself.
- In [iia] we have a finite clause, and in [iib] its tensed verb *was* is omitted, but in [iic] the subject is missing as well as the tenseless verb *living*. There is nevertheless a predication relation understood: the adjunct is understood the same way as *while I was in Rome*.
- The construction in [iii] is marginal with or without the verb, and it is mostly limited to informal conversational style.

14.5.2 Verbless Clauses Functioning Directly as Supplements

Verbless clauses consisting of a subject and a predicate can function as adjuncts, as illustrated in such examples as these:

- [39] i *The meeting finally over, they all adjourned to the local café.*
 ii *The passengers, many of them quite elderly, were forced to wait outside.*
 iii *The obituary listed her books, one of them a three-volume biography.*

The predication relationship is again like the one expressed in finite clauses by *be* (*The meeting was finally over; Many of them were quite elderly; One of them was a three-volume biography*). The adjunct in [i] has a temporal interpretation (it means “when the meeting was finally over”). The one in [ii] could be expressed by a supplementary relative clause: *many of whom were quite elderly*. So could the one in [iii]: *one of which was a three-volume biography*.

Exercises on Chapter 14

1. For each of the following examples, (a) say what you would take to be the predicand, and then (b) say whether you think the example would traditionally be regarded as an instance of the so-called **dangling modifier** construction.
 - i *Having said all that, however, there is little doubt in my mind that Mrs. Thatcher is going to win and thoroughly deserves to do so.*
 - ii *Pinned down by gunfire and unreachable by medical evacuation teams, the main cause of death was loss of blood.*
 - iii *Meandering in at about 11:30 a.m. on a Sunday – somewhere between breakfast and brunch – the place was packed.*
 - iv *Even allowing for the strong feelings on both sides, the behaviour of the demonstrators was indefensible.*
 - v *Flying low, a herd of cattle could be seen.*
2. Classify the underlined clauses below as **finite** or **non-finite**.
 - i *Everyone arrested at the demonstration has now been released.*
 - ii *It is essential that he complete the course.*
 - iii *I think they may not have read the instructions.*
 - iv *Having been through a similar experience myself, I sympathize.*
 - v *I'd advise you not to take it too seriously.*
 - vi *Hurry up, or we'll be late.*
 - vii *Not being an idiot, he didn't take the bait.*
 - viii *Go ahead, make my day.*
 - ix *How can I make you understand?*
 - x *That's when I was arrested.*
3. The verbs in the bracketed clauses below are all **plain forms**. Which of the clauses are **infinitival**, and hence **non-finite**?
 - i *All I did was [give them your phone number].*

- ii *You can stay at our cabin, but [make sure you bring plenty of warm clothes].*
 - iii *I recommend [that the proposal be approved without delay].*
 - iv *They advised me [to reject your offer].*
 - v *Should we [give more money to charity than we do]?*
4. State the function of the underlined non-finite clauses in the following examples (subject in clause structure, complement in nominal, etc.):
- i *It gave us an opportunity to make a quick profit.*
 - ii *This made obtaining a loan virtually impossible.*
 - iii *We're looking forward to seeing you again.*
 - iv *I can't decide what to do about it.*
 - v *They are saving up to buy a washing-machine.*
 - vi *They arrived home to find that the house had been burgled.*
 - vii *Anyone knowing his whereabouts should contact the police.*
 - viii *I'm afraid asking for special consideration won't do any good.*
 - ix *The grid is to prevent cattle wandering off.*
 - x *I'm determined to do better next time.*
5. For each adjective listed below, give an example of its predicative use licensing a hollow infinitival non-finite clause (see §14.2.4) if that is possible; otherwise write 'none'. (The ones in bold italics have comparative and superlative forms, and of course your examples can involve those forms if you wish.)
- i *able*
 - ii *bad*
 - iii *bright*
 - iv *difficult*
 - v *eager*
 - vi *impossible*
 - vii *likely*
 - viii *nice*
 - ix *ready*
 - x *suitable*
6. Which of the following main clauses have both an object and a non-finite complement?
- i *They invited me to join the board.*
 - ii *I forgot to put the oven on.*
 - iii *She intends at some stage to do a Ph.D.*
 - iv *I appeal to you to give us a second chance.*
 - v *I promised them to be back by six.*
 - vi *Ed was told by his doctor to do exercises.*
 - vii *Max was advised to seek medical advice.*

- viii *Get someone to help you.*
 - ix *Try to keep your eye on the ball.*
 - x *Not for nothing had I yearned to desist.*
7. Identify each of the transparent verbs in the following examples.
- i *Correspondent Kwame Holman begins our coverage.*
 - ii *It began to dawn on her what he had in mind.*
 - iii *It began to rain.*
 - iv *It seems like a big problem.*
 - v *It seemed like Yoshi had suddenly become drunk.*
 - vi *It seemed to take hours to get home.*
 - vii *It seems to me that Twitter is mostly about the links to longer pieces of writing elsewhere.*
 - viii *Michelangelo seems to have spent most of his time on the Saint Matthew.*
 - ix *Taiwan began to industrialize.*
 - x *Taiwan began to pursue economic success.*
 - xi *The place seems like a less-mature Red Lobster restaurant.*
 - xii *There began the search for a theology which was as independent as possible from exegesis.*
 - xiii *There began to appear golden prickles of light.*
 - xiv *There soon opened up a new opportunity.*
 - xv *There seem to be less radical options than kidnapping.*
8. Think carefully about the syntax of these five verbs: [i] *allege*; [ii] *know*; [iii] *say*; [iv] *stand*; [v] *think*. Consider the full range of constructions in which each can appear. Do any take non-finite clause complements in any of their uses? If so, what kind of non-finite subordinate clause do they take? Do they occur in object + complement constructions? Are they transparent and do they take ordinary or raised objects? Are there any special syntactic or semantic restrictions on these uses?
9. Identify the category and function (where applicable) of the underlined constituents.
- i *Here's Johnny!*
 - ii *I am serious. And don't call me Shirley.*
 - iii *I mean, funny like I'm a clown? I amuse you?*
 - iv *I wish I knew how to quit you.*
 - v *I'll have what she's having.*
 - vi *I'm also just a girl, standing in front of a boy, asking him to love her.*
 - vii *I'm as mad as hell, and I'm not going to take this anymore!*
 - viii *I'm going to make him an offer he can't refuse.*
 - ix *I'm walking here! I'm walking here!*
 - x *Just keep swimming.*
 - xi *Just when I thought I was out, they pull me back in.*

- xii *Love means never having to say you're sorry.*
- xiii *My precious!*
- xiv *There's no crying in baseball!*
- xv *To infinity and beyond!*
- xvi *Where we're going we don't need roads.*
- xvii *Why so serious?*
- xviii *'You ain't heard nothin' yet!*
- xix *You make me want to be a better man.*
- xx *Gentlemen, you can't fight in here. This is the war room.*

10. [Supplementary exercise] In which cases is subordinator *for* optional? What generalization does this suggest? Can you find any counterexamples?

- i *I didn't intend for it to fizzle out in three years.*
- ii *I don't wish for anyone to have to live with French red tape.*
- iii *It isn't possible for me to be active in bilingual blogging.*
- iv *It wasn't easy for her to understand or interpret.*
- v *It wasn't hard for them to develop an instant crush.*
- vi *It wasn't necessary for us to ride in such dismal weather.*
- vii *It wouldn't hurt for you to post some positive things about Liverpool's performances.*
- viii *The programmer probably didn't mean for it to execute any random piece of SQL.*

11. Identify the function of the underlined pronouns. If the function is ambiguous, explain the different possibilities.

- i *Buckman wondered whether a commercial welding helmet could have filtered his breathing air.*
- ii *Could anyone find memories that would point to his being a Sith Lord?*
- iii *My reading these two pieces was disappointing for Meloy.*
- iv *That added to the intensity of my feeling displaced.*
- v *The first thing to go wrong was his running out of gas.*
- vi *The impact her writing had on me was profound.*
- vii *The only thing she got right in her opening was that she is a member of the "religious wrong".*
- viii *The routine helped students shift the responsibility of their learning from teacher to student.*
- ix *These findings advance our understanding of adolescent dating and sexual activity.*
- x *This is how the entire family makes their living.*

15

Coordinations

The syntax of the constructions known as **coordinations** is rich and complex. Traditional grammars say virtually nothing about them except that words like *and* (traditionally ‘conjunctions’) can be used to link things together. This glosses over many intricate and fascinating facts. Coordinations are unlike any other constituents, in several ways.

15.1 The Structure of Coordinations

Coordinations are utterly unlike other constructions in that they’re **HEADLESS**; they consist of two or more elements called **coordinates** (often but not always of the same category) grouped together with equal syntactic status, but there’s no head. Second, they’re **BOUNDLESS**: there’s no limit to the number of coordinates making up a coordination.

In the most typical cases the coordinates are linked by means of a **coordinator**: one of a very small category of words whose most frequent members are *and*, *or*, and *but*. Coordinators are almost entirely restricted to a single function, namely **marker**. (There are a few odd expressions that make other use of coordinators, but they aren’t relevant here.) In [1], the larger unit (the whole coordination) is in brackets, the constituents that make it up (the coordinates) are underlined, and the coordinator word (the marker) is in small capitals.

- [1] i [Jennifer is a great teacher AND her students really respect her].
 ii They offered us a choice of [coffee, tea, OR juice].
 iii Lee is [very young BUT a quick learner].

In [i], the two coordinates are clauses; in [ii] there are three coordinates, all NPs; and in [iii] the two coordinates are an AdjP and an NP.

15.1.1 Coordinates and Their Coordinators

The coordinates in the examples in [1] have equal syntactic status: each makes the same sort of contribution to the whole thing. They aren’t distinguished as head vs dependent(s). The constructions dealt with in previous chapters (clauses, NPs, VPs, PPs, etc.) have all involved heads (with the possible exception of the verbless clauses

at the end of the [previous chapter](#)). Phrases in our sense always have heads. Coordinations are different: since they're not headed, the bracketed constituents in [1] are not phrases. We're essentially using the term **coordination** as the name of a syntactic category to which all coordinations belong – a category that is neither lexical nor phrasal.

The coordinator indicates the particular relation holding between the coordinates. But there is a difference between the **RELATION** holding between the coordinates and the **POSITION** of the coordinator in the structure. The coordinator forms a constituent with the coordinate following it. In [1] we identified the coordinator using small capitals for presentation purposes, but notice the underlining, which shows that in the syntactic structure a coordinator is the leftmost word in a coordinate. In [1i], for example, the coordination has just two parts at the top level of structure. The first is the clause *Jennifer is a great teacher*. The second, *and her students really respect her*, is also a clause, but it is introduced by the coordinator *and*, marking its relationship to the first clause.

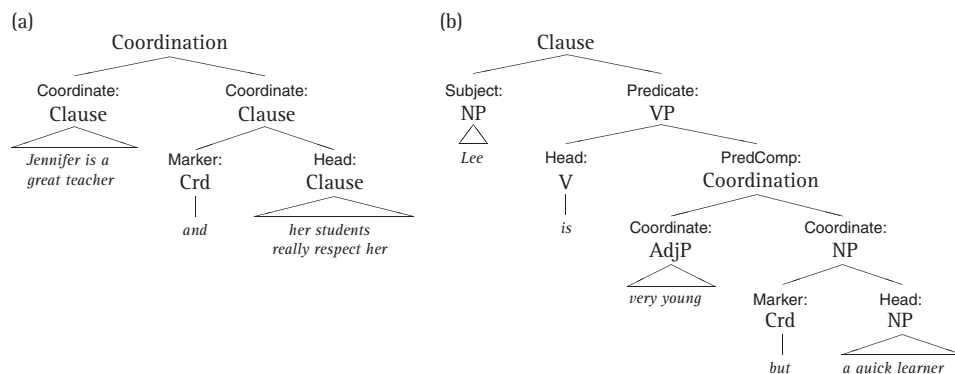
One piece of evidence supporting this analysis is that the two clauses can be in different sentences, possibly even spoken by different people, one adding to what the other said; and when the two clauses are separated like this, the coordinator goes with the second:

- [2] A: *She's a good teacher.*
 B: *Yes. And her students really respect her.*

So we talk about coordinate function not only for a constituent like *her students really respect her*, but also for one like *and her students really respect her*. We'll distinguish them, when we need to, by calling the first a **bare coordinate** and the second an **expanded coordinate**.

In [3] we show simplified diagrams representing the structure for the coordinations in [1i] and [1iii], abbreviating 'coordinator' as 'Crd':

[3]



Note that **coordinator** (Crd) and **coordination** are CATEGORIES, while **coordinate** and **marker** are FUNCTIONS. Also note that although coordinations are not phrases, that's not usually true of their coordinates: *very young* is an AdjP (it has the adjective *young* as its lexical head), and *but a quick learner* is also a phrase (with *a quick learner* as its NP phrasal head).

15.1.2 Where Coordinations Can Occur

Obviously, we now need a way to specify the positions in sentences where coordinations are allowed to occur. So far that is a mystery. A preposition like *of* licenses an NP complement, so how come we can have a PP like *of silver or gold* where the complement is the coordination *silver or gold*?

The answer is that the admissibility of a coordination in a certain position depends on the individual coordinates. The generalization, to put it very informally, is that coordinations are permitted wherever all of its coordinates would be permitted. But we need to clarify that by saying that in the case of an expanded coordinate we mean where its bare counterpart would be permitted, i.e., its head, ignoring the coordinator. So, the admissibility of [1iii] is predictable from two facts: *Lee is very young* is a grammatical clause, and so is *Lee is a quick learner*.

This generalization is the key reason for saying that coordinations don't have heads. This possibility of replacing coordinations by individual coordinates distinguishes coordination very sharply from constructions made up of a head and a dependent. You can often replace a constituent by its head; you can hardly ever replace a constituent by a dependent of its head. The difference can be seen by reading down the [a], [b], and [c] columns in the following examples:

[4]	COORDINATION	HEAD + DEPENDENT
i	a. <i>I [<u>went in and sat down</u>].</i>	b. <i>It is [<u>very big</u>].</i> c. <i>Ed is [<u>fond of it</u>].</i>
ii	a. <i>I <u>went in</u>.</i>	b. <i>It is [<u>big</u>].</i> c. <i>*Ed is [<u>fond</u>].</i>
iii	a. <i>I <u>sat down</u>.</i>	b. <i>*It is [<u>very</u>].</i> c. <i>*Ed is [<u>of it</u>].</i>

- In [ia], the bracketed expression is a coordination, occurring where we would have expected a VP in predicate function to occur. The unmarked VPs inside it are underlined. And each VP could replace the whole coordination, as you see in [iia] and [iiia].
- In the [b] and [c] examples, the bracketed expression consists of a head (doubly underlined) and a dependent. In neither case can each element replace the whole. In [ib], *very big* can be replaced by the head *big* ([iib]), but not by the dependent *very* ([iibb]). In [ic], the dependent *of it* is obligatory, so the bracketed phrase can't be replaced by either the head ([iic]) or the dependent ([iicb]).

Usage Controversy Note

Students are sometimes told in writing classes that they should not ‘begin a sentence with a conjunction’. This is an unmotivated instruction couched in imprecise and old-fashioned terminology (‘conjunction’ traditionally covers all of what we call coordinators, subordinators, and prepositions licensing clause complements). It’s not clear why anyone tries to enforce this on student writers. It’s a policy that conflicts with massive evidence from normal English prose. No matter what kind of writing you examine, you will find sentences beginning with coordinators. (They are not coordinates, by the way; they are sentences having the form of expanded coordinates – a coordinator as marker and a clause as head.) It’s easy to confirm that in novels by highly respected authors they occur every few hundred words, both in dialogue and narration. The same is true for modern non-fiction and journalism.

Teachers may actually be trying to target something else: use of fragmentary sentences, like *And lots of others*. Such fragments are very common in conversation and highly informal writing, but much less common in more serious writing. However, adopting a blanket ban on sentences beginning with coordinators is overkill, and misses the chance to teach a useful lesson about style.

15.2 Distinctive Syntactic Properties of Coordination

Prototypical coordination has three properties which we summarize in [5] and then explain in the following subsections.

- [5] i The coordinates in a coordination are not limited to any fixed number.
- ii Bare coordinates are required to be syntactically similar in certain ways.
- iii An expanded coordinate can never be fronted.

15.2.1 Unlimited Number of Coordinates

One of the properties that makes coordinations so completely unlike other syntactic constructions is that the grammar sets no limit on how many coordinates can belong to a coordination. Lexical heads license only a very small number of complements (up to three, or perhaps four in a few cases); modifiers can be added freely, but each is a single constituent added as modifier to another single constituent; but what’s different with coordinations is that there can be any number of members, all belonging to a single constituent. In [1] above, [i] has two coordinates; [ii] has three; but that is not the limit. In [6] (all from a couple of pages of the same book), [i]

has four coordinates, [ii] has five, and [iii] has six (we underline each of the bare coordinates):

- [6] i *[Free sexual expression, anarchism, mining of the irrational unconscious, and giving it free rein] are what they have in common.*
 ii *[the caste system, witch-burning, harems, cannibalism, and gladiatorial combats]*
 iii *Nothing [noble, sublime, profound, delicate, tasteful or even decent] can find a place in such tableaux.*

Or can link multiple coordinates just as well as *and*; [6iii] illustrates that. And it is easy to find instances of more coordinates than these examples show; naming the colours of the rainbow with a coordination (*red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo, and violet*) would call for seven coordinates, and so on up. Neal Stephenson's novel *The Diamond Age* contains a coordination with forty-one NP coordinates at one point; and the comedian George Carlin, in a recorded act (*Playin' With Your Head*), used a coordination with 122 coordinates.

The coordinator *but* is special in a couple of respects, one of them being that it allows only two coordinates, conveying a rather subtle meaning contrast between them. Using *but* instead of *and* conveys an assumption by the speaker that given the first coordinate you might be inclined to think that the second is a bit unexpected. So *Drive fast but drive carefully* communicates the same instruction as *Drive fast and drive carefully*, but presents the second coordinate as contrasting with the fast-and-furious behaviour that the first might suggest. And *Lara is in London but Sam is in Manchester* suggests that the speaker thinks you might have assumed Lara and Sam would be together. You can't use *but* to express these contrasts with more than two coordinates: it's not grammatical to say **Lara is in London but Sam is in Manchester but Alex is in Liverpool*.

15.2.2 Coordinates Must Be Syntactically Similar

In an acceptable coordination the coordinates have to be syntactically similar in certain ways. The examples given so far contrast with the ungrammatical combinations shown in [7], where the underlined elements are manifestly quite different in kind:

- [7] i **They neglected [their children and to give us directions].*
 ii **She didn't argue [persuasively or that their offer should be rejected].*

This is not because of any incoherence in what the sentences seem to be trying to say. It would be perfectly sensible to assert that they failed to look after their children and also neglected to give us directions to their house, or that she neither argued persuasively nor argued that their offer should be rejected. But you can't say these things using the sentences in [7]. The difference between the constituents that are brought together in these coordinations is just too striking.

[12] The Like Function Condition

A coordination is admissible at a given position in sentence structure if and only if all of its coordinates (or their heads if they are expanded coordinates) are individually admissible at that position with the same function.

The examples given in [13] illustrate this; read down the [a] and [b] columns to see how it works:

- | | | | | | |
|------|-----|----|---------------------------------------|----|---|
| [13] | i | a. | <i>We invited <u>Kim and Pat</u>.</i> | b. | <i>She is <u>very young but a quick learner</u></i> |
| | ii | a. | <i>We invited <u>Kim</u>.</i> | b. | <i>She is <u>very young</u>.</i> |
| | iii | a. | <i>We invited <u>Pat</u>.</i> | b. | <i>She is <u>a quick learner</u>.</i> |

- In the [a] column, the coordinates *Kim* and *Pat* can each replace *Kim and Pat* in [ia], without change of function, so the coordination is grammatical.
- The same holds in the [b] examples, where the coordinates are of different categories: either *very young* (an AdjP) or *a quick learner* (an NP) could stand in place of the coordination with the same function (predicative complement), so again this is properly formed coordination.

But [10i–ii] are not permitted by the Like Function Condition. Although we can replace the coordination by each of the coordinates *the company* and *next week*, or *to the lighthouse* and *for health reasons*, the functions are not the same, as explained in the discussion of [11]. So, the condition is not satisfied in these cases.

Further Predictions of the Likeness Requirement

Another set of facts explained by the Like Function Condition in [12] involves coordination of relative clauses with other kinds of clause, as [14] illustrates:

- | | | |
|------|-----|---|
| [14] | i | <i><u>Some people attended the dinner but they are not members</u>.</i> |
| | ii | <i>Those [<u>who attended the dinner but who are not members</u>] owe \$20.</i> |
| | iii | <i>*Those [<u>who attended the dinner but they are not members</u>] owe \$20.</i> |

The reason [ii] is just as grammatical as [i] is that either relative clause could replace the whole coordination, with the same modifier function. But in [iii], the first coordinate (*who attended the dinner*) could replace the whole coordination in modifier function, but the second could not: **Those they are not members* is ungrammatical (*they are not members* is a content clause, and content clauses are not allowed to function as modifier in NP structure).

But and *although* have very similar meanings here, so it may seem rather surprising that replacing *but* by *although* in [14] yields completely different results:

- | | | |
|------|-----|---|
| [15] | i | <i><u>Some people attended the dinner although they are not members</u>.</i> |
| | ii | <i>*Those [<u>who attended the dinner although who are not members</u>] owe \$20.</i> |
| | iii | <i>Those [<u>who attended the dinner although they are not members</u>] owe \$20.</i> |

Why is [15ii] ungrammatical and [15iii] just fine, when in [14] it was the other way around? The answer is one more lesson telling us that to understand syntax we need to look at syntactic facts, not just meanings. The word *but* is a coordinator, but *although* is a preposition licensing a content clause complement. In [14ii] we have linked two relative clauses together in a coordination. In [15ii] we haven't: we've got one relative clause (its head verb is *attend*), and it has an *although* PP inside it, but there is an inexplicable *who* in the PP. The PP **although who are not members* is ungrammatical for the same reason as **despite which they liked* or **because who it happened*: prepositions can license content clauses, but not relative clauses.

And why is [15iii] grammatical when [14iii] isn't? Because in [14iii] we've made an ungrammatical coordination out of a relative clause modifier (*who attended the dinner*) and a content clause that is not allowed to be a modifier (*they are not members*). In [15iii], by contrast, we have simply put a PP (*although they are not members*) inside a relative clause, and there's nothing wrong with that.

Qualifications and Refinements

We said above that in [12] we would 'state the likeness requirement in simplified form'. Various qualifications, refinements, and exceptions have to be appended to cover additional facts. A rather obvious one involves agreement features. *André and Nicole are nice*, for example, is grammatical despite the fact that replacing the coordination by either coordinate would require altering the agreement: we get neither **André are nice* nor **Nicole are nice*, but instead *André is nice* and *Nicole is nice*. Agreement has to be determined by which constituents are actually in subject function; the 'replacement' experiment abstracts away from that.

Other minor qualifications are needed as well. One is treated in §15.7 below, and involves 'joint coordination' (it involves expressions like *Romeo and Juliet loved each other*). There are a few other sporadic exceptions, some involving coordinations that have turned into lexical items (we get *The polls were by and large accurate* but not **The polls were by accurate* or **The polls were large accurate*).

However, the Like Function Condition in [12] covers the vast majority of the facts about where coordinations can occur, and clarifies the core of the difference between coordinations and head-plus-dependent constructions.

15.2.3 Expanded Coordinates Are Not Like PPs

In [15] we exhibited a very sharp contrast between *but they are not members* and *although they are not members*. The first is an expanded coordinate, but the second is just a PP modifier. Another sharp difference between them is revealed if you take sentences containing the two phrases (like [15i] and [14i]), and try fronting the bits we underline in [16]:

- [16] i *Some people attended the dinner although they are not members.* (= [15i])
 ii *Some people attended the dinner but they are not members.* (= [14i])
 iii *Although they are not members, they attended the dinner.*
 iv **But they are not members, they attended the dinner.*

Putting the adjunct in [16iii] at the beginning of the clause is a grammatically permitted stylistic variant of [i]. However, an expanded coordinate behaves quite differently: shifting the second coordinate of [ii] to the beginning of the clause in the same way gives [iv], which is strikingly ungrammatical.

Despite the similarity of both the superficial form and the approximate meaning, there is a radical difference here. PP adjuncts can occur in different positions in a clause, but in a coordination the initial coordinate can never be the expanded one. Example [ii] is analogous to *silver and gold*; [iv] is analogous to **and gold silver*.

15.3 The Order of Coordinated Constituents

In the simplest and most straightforward cases, the coordinated constituents (by which we mean the content of the bare coordinates) can be interchanged without perceptible effect on the acceptability or interpretation of the coordination:

- [17] i a. *You can have [beans or peas].* b. *You can have [peas or beans].*
 ii a. *I was [hungry and tired].* b. *I was [tired and hungry].*

Coordination of this kind is **symmetric**, in the sense that saying ‘P and Q’ (where P and Q are statements) is equivalent to saying ‘Q and P’. It contrasts with various kinds of **asymmetric** coordination; two examples of which are given in [18]:

- [18] i a. *We were left [high and dry].* b. **We were left [dry and high].*
 ii a. *I [got up and had breakfast].* b. *I [had breakfast and got up].*

The expression *high and dry* in [i] originally meant “above the tide line” or (of a boat) “abandoned”, but it’s a fossilized phrase now, so that the order is fixed. English has hundreds of fixed expressions of this kind: *aid and abet*, *betwixt and between*, *hem and haw*, *hue and cry*, *to and fro*, etc. The Like Function Condition in [12] is inapplicable to fossilized items of this sort: in *They hemmed and hawed*, for example, you can’t replace *hemmed and hawed* either by *hemmed* or by *hawed* alone. But there are others where [12] does apply and the order is not fixed by the grammar but merely familiar and conventional, so that switching them around merely seems a bit unnatural: *knife and fork*, *hope and pray*, *men and women*, *bread and butter*, etc.

In [18ii] we have a different situation. The [a] and [b] versions are both fully acceptable, but they differ in their natural interpretations. This is because there

is an implication that the events took place in the order described: in [iia] you understand that I got up and then had breakfast, while [iib] suggests I had breakfast in bed.

There are a good many cases of *and* and *or* coordinations carrying implications beyond the basic additive or alternative meaning of the coordinator, making the coordination asymmetric. A few examples are given in [19]:

- [19] i *He [parked his car at a bus-stop and was ticketed].*
 ii *[Pay within a week and you'll get a 10% discount].*
 iii *[We need to pay the bill today or we won't get the discount].*

- In [i], the order implies that the parking took place before the ticketing, but also further implies that the parking ticket was the CONSEQUENCE of the parking.
- In [ii], there is a conditional implication: “If you pay within a week you get the discount”.
- There is also a conditional implication in [iii], but with *or* the implicit condition is negative: “If we DON'T pay the bill today we won't get the discount”.

15.4 The Marking of Coordination

In all the examples so far the coordination construction has been marked by a coordinator which is the first word of the final coordinate, which is the only expanded coordinate. This is the most common pattern, but not the only one. There are three other possibilities.

15.4.1 Unmarked Coordination

Sometimes no coordinator is used, so the coordination is just a list. Commas are used to separate the items in writing. From the context you can usually tell which coordinator would be appropriate semantically:

- [20] i *He felt [tired, depressed, listless].* [and is understood]
 ii *Did they offer you [wine, beer, whisky]?* [or is understood]

15.4.2 Repetition of Coordinators

The coordinator in a coordination can be attached either to the last coordinate or to all except the first. The repetition of the coordinator in the latter case gives added emphasis to the relation it expresses:

- [21] i *He felt [tired, and depressed, and listless].*
 ii *They offered us a choice of [wine or beer or whisky].*

15.4.3 Correlative Coordination

The first coordinate is never introduced by a coordinator. (Single constituents with the form of an expanded coordinate are not evidence against this; the title of Randy Shilts's book *And the Band Played On* is not part of a coordination, it is just a clause having the form of an expanded coordinate.) However, the initial coordinate may be marked by one of three determinatives which are paired with coordinators: *both* (paired with *and*), *either* (which goes with *or*), and *neither* (usually paired with *nor*). These combinations form **correlative coordinations**.

- [22] i [Both the managing director and the company secretary] have been arrested.
 ii It's one of those movies that you'll [either love or hate].
 iii [Neither Sue nor her partner] supported the plan.

A couple of points about these should be noted, because some of them turn up frequently in usage and writing books.

- *Both* is restricted to coordinations with only two coordinates. We treat this as a syntactic fact; that is, we regard **both Belgium, Holland, and Luxembourg* as ungrammatical. Moreover, choosing *both of the children* over *all of the children* is pretty much obligatory when there are only two children: phrases like **all of her two children* effectively never occur (except perhaps sarcastically, as in *Thanks so much to all of the two volunteers who turned up for Saturday's clear-up day!*).
- Some usage books say the restriction to two coordinates also holds for *either* and *neither*, but the evidence tells otherwise: phrases like *either Belgium, Holland, or Luxembourg* are quite normal.
- *Neither* usually pairs with *nor*, though *or* is sometimes found instead, even in professionally edited prose. It might be best to treat this as a common error: although *neither confirm or deny* is easy to find in printed sources, *neither confirm nor deny* is at least ten times more frequent.
- *Nor* is a clear member of the coordinator category when it occurs with correlative *neither*, but when it occurs without *neither*, as in *She didn't like it; nor did I*, it is an adverb used as an adjunct (notice the subject-auxiliary inversion). In such cases it can be preceded by a coordinator like *and* or *but*.
- The determinatives *both*, *either*, and *neither* are often found **displaced** from their basic position in one direction or the other: we find phrases like *both to [the men and their employers]*. Here *both* is displaced to the left. The more balanced order would be *to [both the men and their employers]*, with *both* immediately before the first coordinate. We also find phrases like *rapid changes [in either the mixed liquor or in the effluent]*, where *either* is displaced to the right: the balanced order would be *rapid changes either [in the mixed liquor or in the effluent]*. Writing advice sources almost

universally insist that all such displacements are errors, which is a good reason for avoiding them; but they are very common in speech and informal writing, and will normally pass unnoticed.

15.5 Layered Coordination

A coordinate can belong to virtually any syntactic category. And that means a coordination can itself be a coordinate:

- [23] i [[Kim works in a bank and Pat is a teacher], but [Sam is still unemployed]].
 ii Get me an [[egg] or [ham and cheese]] sandwich.
 iii I don't think it's by [[Gilbert and Sullivan] or [Rodgers and Hammerstein]].

Here we have **layered coordination**; one **coordination** functioning as a **coordinate** within a larger one. The outer square brackets enclose the larger coordination, with the inner brackets enclosing the coordinates within it; underlining then marks the coordinated phrases at the lower level.

- In [i], the larger coordination has the form 'X *but* Y'; the Y is just a clause (*Sam is still unemployed*), but the X is a coordination of the two underlined clauses. At the top level we contrast employed with unemployed; at the lower level we distinguish two jobs.
- In [ii], we have 'X *or* Y' expressing a choice, where X is a nominal and Y is an *and*-coordination.
- In [iii], we have 'X *or* Y' at the top level (in the *by*-PP), and at the lower level each of X and Y has the form of an *and*-coordination.

In these examples we have contrasting coordinators: *and* and *but* in [i], *or* and *and* in [ii] and [iii]. This itself is sufficient to indicate that there is layered coordination. A single coordination with more than two coordinates may have just one coordinator or multiple occurrences of the same coordinator (as in [21]), but not two different coordinators.

15.6 Main-Clause and Lower-Level Coordination

Coordinations can occur at almost any place in constituent structure, from large constituents down to small ones like individual words. We make a general distinction between **main-clause coordination** and **lower-level coordination**:

- [24] MAIN-CLAUSE COORDINATION
- i [It was a perfect day and everyone was in good spirits]. [Main clauses]
- LOWER-LEVEL COORDINATION
- ii a. I suppose he [made a mistake or changed his mind]. [VP]
 b. We met [my bank manager and her husband] later. [NP]
 c. She introduced me to her [mother and father]. [Nom or Noun]
 d. We work [with and for] the residents. [Preposition]

15.6.1 Equivalent Main-Clause and Lower-Level Coordinations

In many cases a lower-level coordination can be expanded into a logically equivalent main-clause one. This is so with all of the examples in [24ii], which can be expanded as follows:

- [25] i I suppose [he made a mistake, or he changed his mind].
 ii We met my bank manager later, and we met her husband later.
 iii She introduced me to her mother, and she introduced me to her father.
 iv We work with the residents and we work for the residents.

These are logically equivalent to [24iia–d]. There may be subtle meaning differences: the versions in [25] do seem to separate the events more, so that you would be more likely to infer from [24iic] that she introduced me to her parents together, and from [25iii] that the introductions were on different occasions. But if [24iic] is true, then [25iii] is, and vice versa; that is, they are logically equivalent.

15.6.2 Non-Equivalent Main-Clause and Lower-Level Coordinations

There are some cases where pairs with lower-level and main-clause coordination are NOT logically equivalent (we write ‘≠’ to mean “is not equivalent in meaning to”):

- [26] i a. One teacher was [popular and patient]. ≠
 b. One teacher was popular, and one teacher was patient.
 ii a. No one [stood up and complained]. ≠
 b. No one stood up and no one complained.
 iii a. I didn’t have either [tea or coffee]. ≠
 b. Either I didn’t have tea or I didn’t have coffee.

- In [ia] we have a single teacher with two properties; [ib] talks about two teachers.
- In [iia] no one BOTH stood up and complained – though it is possible that someone stood up without complaining or complained without standing up. But in [iib] these possibilities are each separately excluded, so it says that no one EITHER stood up or complained.
- In [iii], suppose I had tea but not coffee. Then [b] is true but [a] is false. (Compare with *I didn’t have tea and I didn’t have coffee*, which is equivalent to [iiia].)

15.7 Joint versus Distributive Coordination

One special case where a lower-level coordination is not equivalent to a corresponding main-clause coordination is in **joint coordination**, as opposed to the default **distributive coordination**:

- | | | |
|------|--|--|
| [27] | DISTRIBUTIVE COORDINATION | JOINT COORDINATION |
| | i a. [<u>Mia</u> and <u>Emon</u>] are fine oboists. | b. [<u>Mia</u> and <u>Emon</u>] are a nice couple. |
| | ii a. [<u>Lee</u> , <u>Robin</u> , and <u>Sam</u>] like you. | b. [<u>Lee</u> , <u>Robin</u> , and <u>Sam</u>] like each other. |

- In [i], the property of being a fine player applies to Mia and Emon separately – it's distributed between them (you can't share an oboe); the property of making a nice couple, however, applies to the two of them jointly: neither one of them alone could make a nice couple.
- In [ii], the property of liking you applies to Lee, Robin, and Sam individually, but the property of liking each other can only apply to them jointly, as a group.

Joint coordination is almost always marked by the coordinator *and*. The central cases are NP coordinations. Cases like [ib] and [iib] violate the generalization [12]: it is not possible to replace the coordination by either coordinate alone. It is at the very least semantically incoherent, and probably best regarded as ungrammatical, to say **Mia is a nice couple* or **Lee likes each other*. Condition [12], therefore, simply doesn't apply to joint coordination, which is defined by the following properties:

- It requires that each coordinate denote a member of a set.
- It requires that the coordinates belong to the same syntactic category.
- It disallows correlative coordination (**Both Mia and Emon are a fine pair*).

15.8 Non-Basic Coordination

So far we have focused on what can be called **basic coordination** constructions, the ones where all the following properties hold:

- [28]
- i The coordination consists of a continuous sequence of coordinates.
 - ii The coordinates are either **bare** or **expanded** by a coordinator or determinative.
 - iii The coordinates can occur as constituents in non-coordination constructions.

In this final section we very briefly discuss various kinds of **non-basic coordination**, which depart from that elementary pattern.

15.8.1 Expansion of Coordinates by Adjuncts

A coordinate can contain an adjunct as well as (or instead of) a marker:

- [29] i He felt [not angry] [but instead deeply disappointed].
 ii She comes home [every Christmas] [and sometimes at Easter as well].
 iii We could meet [on Friday] [or alternatively at the weekend if you prefer].

The underlined expressions here are neither markers of the relation holding between the coordinates nor part of the bare coordinates. They are **adjuncts** in the coordinates in which they're located. Such adjuncts follow any marker of the coordinate, if there is one.

15.8.2 Gapped Coordination

The middle part of a non-initial coordinate can be omitted if it is recoverable from the corresponding part of the initial coordinate, a construction that linguists often call 'gapping'. We will call it **gapped coordination** (though here 'gap' doesn't have a close relation to our earlier use of it in constructions with *wh* words etc.):

- [30] i Her son lives in Boston and her daughter ___ in Chicago.
 ii Kim joined the company in 1988, and Pat ___ the following year.
 iii Sue wants to be a doctor, Max ___ a dentist.

The space marked '___' is understood by reference to the first coordinate: in these cases, "lives", "joined the company", and "wants to be". The missing part in this kind of construction normally includes the verb but can include other material too (as in [ii]). The antecedent needn't be a syntactic constituent; it isn't in [iii] (*wants to be a doctor* is made up of *wants* plus *to be a doctor*, so *wants to be* isn't a phrase).

15.8.3 Coordination of Non-Constituents

A third non-basic coordination construction allows for coordinations of word sequences that under our analysis do not correspond to constituents. This is illustrated in [31]:

- [31] i We gave [JJ a hat and Fay a shirt].
 ii They stay [in Boston during the week and with their parents at the weekend].
 iii I could lend you [\$30 now or \$50 next week].

- The coordinates here do not count as constituents in corresponding non-coordination constructions. In *We gave JJ a hat*, for example, the underlined part isn't a single constituent: it's a sequence of two NPs, the first functioning as indirect object, the second as direct object. In [i], however, *JJ a hat* does form a constituent by virtue of being a coordinate. It is, as it were, a one-off constituent for the nonce, just in this particular construction – hence the term 'nonce coordinations' that is sometimes given to sequences like *JJ a hat and Fay a shirt* etc.

- The coordinates in this kind of coordination are required to be syntactically parallel: the separate elements of each coordinate must have the same functions in corresponding non-coordination constructions. In *We gave JJ a hat* and *We gave Fay a shirt*, both the first elements (*JJ* and *Fay*) are indirect objects and both second elements (*a hat* and *a shirt*) are direct objects, so [31i] is acceptable. The coordination is ungrammatical if the functions don't match in this way, as we see from **We gave [JJ \$1,000 and generously to charity]*, with two objects in the first coordinate and a manner adjunct plus PP complement in the second.

15.8.4 Delayed Right Constituent Coordination

Another odd coordination construction is illustrated in the [a] members of [32], where the [b] members are the corresponding basic coordinations:

- [32] i a. *She noticed but didn't comment on his inconsistencies.*
 b. *She noticed his inconsistencies but didn't comment on them.*
 ii a. *[Two perfect and four slightly damaged] copies were found.*
 b. *[Two perfect copies and four slightly damaged ones] were found.*

The delayed right constituent coordination construction has the following distinctive properties:

- At least one of the coordinates does not form a constituent in a corresponding non-coordination construction. In *She didn't comment on his inconsistencies*, for example, the underlined sequence is not a constituent, since *on* is head of the PP *on his inconsistencies*. Similarly, *two perfect* does not form a constituent in *two perfect copies*, which consists of the determiner *two* plus the head nominal *perfect copies*.
- The element on the right of the coordination (doubly underlined) is understood as related to each coordinate. We read [i], for example, as if *his inconsistencies* was the object of the *noticed* VP as well as the object of the *on* PP.

The term **delayed right constituent coordination** reflects the salient difference between this construction and basic coordination. In the latter the doubly underlined expression occurs earlier, as the rightmost constituent of the first coordinate (and then is repeated, normally in reduced form, at the end of the second): *She noticed his inconsistencies but didn't comment on them*. In the non-basic version, therefore, this element appears to be held back, delayed.

15.8.5 End-Attached Coordinates

One more construction that is semantically related to the concept of coordination, but from which NO ACTUAL COORDINATION CONSTITUENT RESULTS, involves what we could call **end-attachment coordinates**, illustrated in the [a] members of the pairs in [33].

- [33] i a. Jaya was included on the shortlist, but not Sho.
 b. [Jaya but not Sho] was included on the shortlist.
 ii a. They've charged the boss with perjury – and her executive assistant.
 b. They've charged [the boss and her executive assistant] with perjury.

In such cases, the first underlined element has a non-coordinate function in a larger structure: subject in [33ia] and object in [33iia]. It is the anchor for a supplement (see §8.11), namely the second underlined phrase, which contains a coordinator. But in the [a] versions, that phrase, despite looking like an expanded coordinate, doesn't form a constituent with the first underlined element.

Exercises on Chapter 15

1. Give the function of the underlined constituents. If the function is ambiguous, explain both interpretations. Provide evidence to support your analysis.
 - i Both the twins were laughing, and I couldn't stop.
 - ii If either of them had laughed, I hadn't noticed.
 - iii Neither the twins nor I were laughing.
 - iv Neither twin was laughing, but nor were they smiling.
 - v Neither were they laughing nor smiling.
 - vi Was the overall theme optimistic, pessimistic, or neither?
2. [Supplementary exercise] Consider the underlined words in the following examples: a realist slash dreamer; opioid versus alcohol versus tobacco dependence. Are they prepositions or coordinators? Give grammatical and ungrammatical examples to support your answer.
3. Along with the coordinator *but* there is also a preposition *but*. For each of the following examples, decide whether *but* is a preposition or coordinator. Give reasons, citing evidence.
 - i He knew almost everything, but not the right answer.
 - ii He knew everything but the right answer.
 - iii That will do, but try again if you want.
 - iv There's nothing to do but try again.
 - v Don't share the results with anyone but me.
4. [Supplementary exercise] We mentioned that some prescriptive manuals and English teachers advise against beginning a sentence with a coordinator. Choose a published work that you think is a good example of written Standard English – one that you enjoy and admire – and, reading from the beginning, look for a sentence that begins with a coordinator (*and*, *or*, *but*). Cite the work and report how many sentences you had to read before you found one.

5. Consider the determinatives *both*, *either*, and *neither* that occur in **correlative coordinations**. Which, if any, can occur introducing **main clause coordinations**? Give grammatical and ungrammatical examples to support your answer.
6. Explain why the following coordinations are **asymmetric**.
 - i *He studied intensively all night and aced the test.*
 - ii *Talk to me like that again and you'll be fired.*
 - iii *Don't tell anyone or we'll spoil the surprise.*
 - iv *You can't work eighteen hours a day and not endanger your health.*
 - v *You can eat as much of this as you like and not put on any weight.*
7. Explain why the following **lower-level coordinations** are not equivalent to **main-clause coordination**.
 - i *Who went to the movies and left the house unlocked?*
 - ii *Did she take the car and go to the beach?*
 - iii *The last and most telling objection concerned the cost.*
 - iv *They could find nothing wrong with the battery or with the thermostat.*
 - v *One guy was drunk and abusive.*
8. For each of the following examples, say which kind of **non-basic coordination** construction it exemplifies.
 - i *I'd expected Jill to back us, but not her father.*
 - ii *It was criticized by some for being too long and by others for being too short.*
 - iii *Both the British and the French delegates supported the proposal.*
 - iv *You can have a banana or else an apple instead.*
 - v *Max left the country in May and the rest of the family in June.*
9. We noted that most coordinates share a category, but it's more important that they share a function. Nevertheless, it's not uncommon to meet examples in real life where neither category nor function is shared. Consider the following examples and decide whether the coordinates share both category and function, just function, or neither.
 - i *... whether caused by site users, tampering, hacking, or by any equipment ...*
 - ii *Is it better, worse, or about the same?*
 - iii *the electrical, mechanical, or plumbing system*
 - iv *They're fun, intelligent, and somebody I'd really like to hang out with.*
 - v *You can find it in China, in India, and elsewhere.*
 - vi *We've seen these changes in Africa, in Tanzania, and Kenya.*
 - vii *It's related neither to one nor the other.*
 - viii *She was taken out in a fit of rage and handcuffs.*
 - ix *Argon, neon, krypton, xenon, and radon are almost entirely non-reactive.*
 - x *He's a bad boy and gives me lots of trouble.*

10. Say which of the following examples exhibit **distributive** coordination and which illustrate **joint** coordination.
- i *Cherry red and azure go well together.*
 - ii *It's a mixture of cherry red and azure.*
 - iii *Matt and Michael swapped shifts.*
 - iv *These colours are appropriate for any occasion, and they go well together.*
 - v *Tomo and Felisa just met Brandon.*
 - vi *Tomo and Felisa just met.*
11. To what extent are verb forms constrained when two VPs are coordinated? Try changing the verb forms of the underlined words to find out.
- i *Can you stop coming and going like that?*
 - ii *Go and help them.*
 - iii *It's important that she rest and sleep when needed.*
 - iv *That crow comes and goes regularly.*
 - v *The paint was peeling and fading.*
 - vi *We don't know what alien lifeforms existed or remained.*
12. [Supplementary exercise] In [Chapter 7](#) we illustrated **preposition stranding** with sentences like *What are you looking at?* etc. Consider whether **coordinators** can be stranded. Illustrate your discussion with grammatical and ungrammatical sequences of words as appropriate.
13. [Supplementary exercise] **Particles** are a special kind of complement (recall [§7.7.3](#)). Can they be coordinated with each other? Present a suitable array of evidence for your view.
14. [Supplementary exercise] Can all of the nine LEXICAL categories (V, N, D, Adj, Adv, P, Sbr, Crd, Intj) be coordinated? Present your evidence.

16.1 Introduction

This chapter is concerned with phenomena that many linguists consider the most interesting in all of English syntax. The linking theme is that the sort of constructions surveyed here have sentence properties that relate to the surrounding discourse: the acceptability of the sentences involved can depend on what has been established by the immediately preceding sentences in the text or conversation. The sort of sentences we'll be looking at are illustrated by the [a] examples in [1].

- [1] i a. *Her son was hired by the school.* b. *The school hired her son.*
 ii a. *It's unusual for her to be this late.* b. *For her to be this late is unusual.*
 iii a. *There were two doctors on the plane.* b. *Two doctors were on the plane.*

These are **non-canonical** constructions. Example [ia] illustrates a **passive** clause; [iia] is an example of **extraposition**; and [iiaa] exemplifies the **existential** construction. These all have the following properties in common:

- [2] i Characteristically, they have a counterpart which is syntactically more elementary or basic (given here in the [b] examples).
 ii Although they have the same core (logical) meaning as their basic counterpart, they package and present the information of the sentence differently.

16.1.1 The Basic Counterpart

The [b] examples in [1] are all structurally simpler than those in [a]. In every case the [a] versions contain extra words – the auxiliary *be* and the preposition *by* in [ia], the dummy pronouns *it* and *there* in [iia] and [iiaa]. In the examples chosen, the [b] versions are all canonical clauses, but there are similar pairs where both members are non-canonical; for example, in the negatives *Her son wasn't hired by the school* and *The school didn't hire her son* (recall that, by our stipulative definition, all negative clauses are non-canonical).

For the passive, there is an established name for the basic counterpart: [1ib] is an active clause. But there is no established name for [iib]: this is simply the non-extraposition counterpart of [iia]. Similarly, [iiib] is just the non-existential counterpart of [iiaa]. And this will be the case with the other constructions we deal

with in this chapter: we have special names for the non-basic constructions, but not for their basic counterparts.

Exceptional Cases with No Well-Formed Basic Counterpart

We said that the non-canonical clauses CHARACTERISTICALLY have counterparts of syntactically more basic form. But there are important exceptions. In some cases, the form that would be expected as the basic counterpart is in fact ungrammatical. The existential construction provides an example:

- | | | |
|-----|--|--------------------------------------|
| [3] | <small>EXISTENTIAL</small> | <small>NON-EXISTENTIAL</small> |
| | i a. <i>There was a bottle on the table.</i> | b. <i>A bottle was on the table.</i> |
| | ii a. <i>There is plenty of time.</i> | b. <i>*Plenty of time is.</i> |

Both versions are permitted in [3i] (or in our original pair [1iii]), but only the existential version is grammatical in [3ii]. The verb *be* can't normally occur without a complement within the VP, so [3iib] is ungrammatical. There are other cases of this sort, as we'll see later.

16.1.2 Core Meaning and Information Packaging

The pairs in [1] have the same **core meaning** in the sense explained in §14.4.1: since they are declarative clauses, having the same core meaning is a matter of having the same truth conditions. With pair [i], for example, if it's true that her son was hired by the school, it must be true that the school hired her son, and vice versa. And likewise, if [ia] is false, [ib] must be false too. The differences have to do not with the information presented but with how it is organized and presented: the two clauses in each pair PACKAGE THE INFORMATION DIFFERENTLY.

We will refer collectively to the passive, extraposition, and existential constructions – and others to be introduced below – as **information-packaging constructions**: they depart from the most elementary syntactic structure in order to package the informational content of a clause in special ways. Our major concern in this chapter will therefore be to describe the syntactic differences between these constructions and their basic counterparts and to investigate the factors which favour or disfavour the use of one of these constructions rather than the more basic counterpart.

Exceptional Cases Where the Core Meanings Are Different

We have said that clauses belonging to one of the information-packaging constructions GENERALLY have the same core meaning as their basic counterpart: the qualification is needed because there are special factors that can cause a difference in the core meanings. Consider the following existential / non-existential pair:

- | | | |
|-----|---|---|
| [4] | <small>EXISTENTIAL</small> | <small>NON-EXISTENTIAL</small> |
| | a. <i>There weren't many members present.</i> | b. <i>Many members weren't present.</i> |

Suppose the statements [4a] and [4b] are talking about the annual conference of the Modern Language Association, which has about 25,000 members in 100 countries. While [a] is always false (the number of members who attend is typically between 8,000 and 12,000), [b] is always true (each year many thousands of active members are unable to attend). These sentences are not saying the same thing in different ways: they're saying completely different things.

The reason has to do with the fact that the clauses contain a quantifier (*many*) and a negative word (*weren't*). The negative comes first in [a] but the quantifier is first in [b]. The relative order affects the **scope** of the negative, as explained in §9.5. This isn't a fact about existential clauses: any clause in which a negative word precedes a quantifier tends to be interpreted with the negative including the quantifier in its scope.

Apart from the special factor of scope, corresponding existential and non-existential clauses do have the same truth conditions, as illustrated in [3i]. And that is also true for the other constructions considered. In the remainder of this chapter we will set such issues aside.

16.2 Passive Clauses

The first information-packaging construction we consider is the **passive clause**. Passive clauses contrast with **active clauses** in a system called **voice**, so we consider that first.

16.2.1 Syntactic Functions and Semantic Roles

There are certain characteristic ways in which **SYNTACTIC FUNCTIONS** are aligned with **SEMANTIC ROLES** in a clause. Usually there are also formal differences either associated with the verb (like special inflection or uses of auxiliaries) or associated with the NPs (like special case marking or uses of prepositions). The terms **active** and **passive** are traditional ones based on the semantic role of the subject in **CLAUSES EXPRESSING ACTIONS**.

- [5] In clauses describing some deliberate action, the subject is normally aligned with the active participant (the **agent**) in the active voice, but with the passive participant (the **patient**) in the passive voice.

This applies straightforwardly to the action clauses in [6]:

- | | | |
|-----|--------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| [6] | ACTIVE | PASSIVE |
| | a. <i>The boy fed the cat.</i> | b. <i>The cat was fed by the boy.</i> |

These clauses describe an action in which the boy had the role of agent while the cat was the patient.

- In [a] the subject is *the boy*, the NP referring to the agent, the active participant who provides the food.
- In [b] the subject is *the cat*, the NP referring to the patient, the passive participant who receives the food.

We say that clause [a] is the active variant and clause [b] is the passive variant.

However, it is very important not to try and DEFINE passives in terms of whether or not the subject syntactic function corresponds to an active agent semantic role. Many clauses do not describe actions at all, but they can be identified as belonging to the active or passive construction on the basis of having syntactic structures parallel to those in [6]:

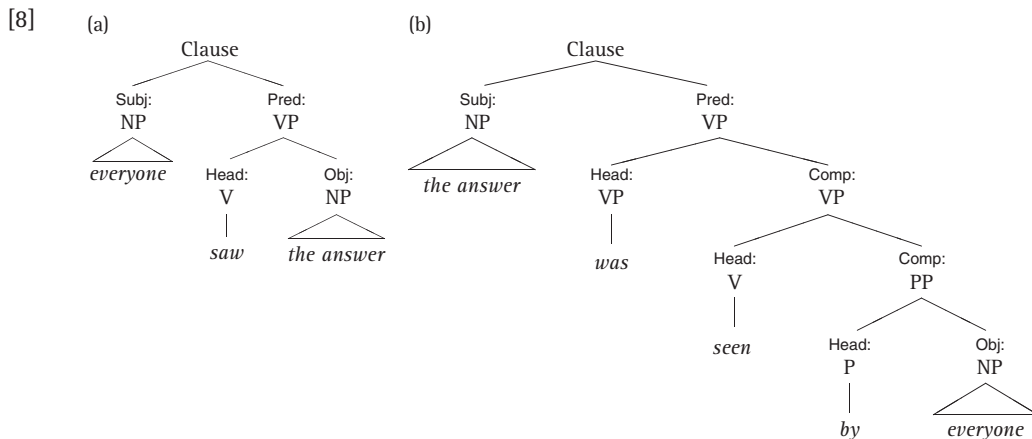
- | | ACTIVE | PASSIVE |
|-----|--------------------------------------|--|
| i | a. <i>Everyone saw the answer.</i> | b. <i>The answer was seen by everyone.</i> |
| ii | a. <i>His colleagues value him.</i> | b. <i>He is valued by his colleagues.</i> |
| iii | a. <i>Her charm matches her wit.</i> | b. <i>Her wit is matched by her charm.</i> |

Seeing what the right answer is, valuing a colleague, and being a quality matching another quality couldn't conceivably be called actions, but the syntactic relation between the members of these pairs is the same as that between [6a] and [6b], so they can be classified as active and passive pairs.

16.2.2 Differences between Active and Passive Clauses

Examples like [1ia], and the [b] examples in [6–7], illustrate the most straightforward kind of passive clause. We'll look first at how they differ from their active counterparts, and then extend the account to cover other passive constructions.

Structural diagrams for the examples in [7i] are shown in [8], and the syntactic differences are summarized in [9].



- [9]
- i The subject of the active (*everyone*) appears in the passive as a complement inside the *by*-PP, which is itself a complement in the VP.
 - ii The direct object in the active version appears as the subject of the passive.
 - iii The passive has an auxiliary verb *be* that is not there in the active; it licenses as a complement a subjectless non-finite clause (*seen by everyone*) whose head (*seen*) is in past participle form.

Many grammarians would call the phrase *by everyone* the ‘agent’; that word is widely used as the name of a semantic role, equivalent to ‘doer’; but often the *by* PP in a passive will not refer to anything like an agent. Syntactically it is just a complement PP, and like many complements, it is optional: [7b] would still be grammatical, and [8b] a correct structure for it, if we omitted the *by everyone* PP from both.

The auxiliary *be* found in many passive clauses, like any other verb in a tensed clause, will have its agreement features for person and number determined by the subject. Whereas *value* agrees with the plural subject *his colleagues* in [7ia], it agrees with the 3rd person singular subject *he* in [7iib]. For the alternative sentence *His colleagues had valued him*, where the verb *value* follows the perfect auxiliary *had* and hence is in the past participle form, the auxiliary *be* would take that form in the corresponding passive, and we would have *He had been valued by his colleagues*.

16.2.3 Information Packaging in Passives

The availability of passive counterparts for active clauses allows for different ways of aligning the various semantic roles in a clause with the internal and external complements, and hence of deciding which one will come early in the clause and which will come later. Generally, as in all the examples in [6–7], there will be some degree of choice about which NP to choose as subject and which as internal complement. But the choice between active and passive is not entirely free. A major factor influencing the choice between the possible orders of presentation has to do with the **familiarity** status of the NPs: whether they present old (familiar) or new (unfamiliar) information.

The concepts of old and new information have a narrow sense which applies to the discourse in which a sentence occurs (we will introduce a broader sense of old information in §16.3). Suppose a conversation began with one of the following sentences:

- [10]
- i The plumber says the dishwasher can't be repaired, but I don't think that's true.
 - ii My neighbour came over this morning; she asked me if I'd seen her cat.

- In [i], the first underlined sequence – the whole of the first coordinate – represents new information: I'm telling you this, not treating it as something you're already familiar with from what has already been said. The double-underlined word *that*

within the second clause is interpreted as “the dishwasher can’t be repaired”, which is now **old** – it’s part of the information that has already been introduced in the first coordinate.

- But information is to be understood in a broad sense that covers entities as well as facts or propositions. *My neighbour* and *her cat* in [ii] refer to entities that haven’t been mentioned previously, so they represent information that is **new** to the discourse. However, when we mention her again, using *she*, my neighbour is now old information. *I*, *me*, and *my* always count as old because the deictic 1st and 2nd person pronouns (see §5.8.1) refer to participants in the discourse (the speaker and the addressee), who can always be regarded as familiar – every discourse has a speaker (or signer, or author) and an addressee (or reader).

In English, there is a broad preference for packaging information so that SUBJECTS REPRESENT OLD INFORMATION (if there is any to be expressed). It’s only a preference, of course: there’s no question of a ban on subjects being new (that’s obvious from [10], where both *the plumber* and *my neighbour* are subjects that are new to the discourse). But the preference is strong enough to be a clear influence on the choice between equivalent active and passive clauses. Compare the active/passive pairs in [11]:

- [11] i a. *A storm damaged the roof.* b. *The roof was damaged by a storm.*
 ii a. *I bought a new guitar.* b. *?*A new guitar was bought by me.*

- In [i], the active example [a] has a new-information subject *a storm* (notice the indefinite article), and [b], the passive, has a subject *the roof* which at least could be old information (the definite article indicates that you’re assumed to know which roof I mean). The passive version will often be preferred in such pairs – though this is just a weak preference, and both sentences in [i] are perfectly grammatical and acceptable.
- Things are different in [ii], however. Suppose the context is one where I’ve just said that I’ve been shopping: *a new guitar* is new to the discourse, while *I* (or its accusative form *me*) is old information. Here only the active version, with old-information *I* as subject, will normally be acceptable: [iib] sounds extremely strange, especially with no emphasis on *me*. (There is a tendency for definite NPs to be old information in the discourse, and for subjects to be definite. Similarly, there’s a tendency for indefinite NPs to be new, and not to be subjects. In [i], the definite article in *the roof* is used rather than the indefinite NP *a roof* not because it’s old information, but because I expect that it’s identifiable. See §5.3.1 for our discussion of definiteness.)

Active is the default: the use of actives is not restricted by constraints relating to the combination of old and new information. The passive, by contrast, is restricted. This is the generalization expressing the restriction:

- [12] In a passive clause it is not normally possible for the **subject** to be **new** to the discourse if the *by* phrase complement represents **old** information in the discourse.

Example [11iib] flagrantly violates this constraint, and this is why it sounds so extraordinarily unnatural.

There is far more to the choice between active and passive clauses than there is space to discuss here: length and complexity of NPs can make a difference, and so can aspects of the narrative flow in a discourse. But the single thing we want to point out here is that while an active clause and its corresponding passive normally have the same core meaning, they are NOT FREELY INTERCHANGEABLE. They differ in how the information is presented, and one important factor in the choice between them concerns the status of the two major NPs with respect to the distinction between information that is new to the discourse and information that is old.

16.2.4 Short Passives

As we mentioned above, the *by* phrase complement differs from the subject in that in almost all cases it is OPTIONAL. Passive clauses with no *by* PP complement are called **short passives**; the passives discussed so far are called **long passives**. Short passives are actually much more frequent than long passives. They have an important property: they enable us to LEAVE OUT information that normally has to be included in finite active clauses, namely the information expressed in the active clause subject. Compare, then, the examples in [13], where the active versions are ungrammatical but the passive ones are fine:

- | | | |
|------|--|--|
| [13] | <small>ACTIVE</small> | <small>PASSIVE</small> |
| | i a. <i>*Built the house in 1960.</i> | b. <i>The house was built in 1960.</i> |
| | ii a. <i>*Know little about coelocanths.</i> | b. <i>Little is known about coelocanths.</i> |
| | iii a. <i>*Made mistakes.</i> | b. <i>Mistakes were made.</i> |

The passive versions enable us to avoid trying to explicitly identify:

- who built the house (we may have no idea who it was, or it may not be relevant);
- who exactly is ignorant about coelocanths (nearly all ichthyologists, presumably);
- who blundered (people don't always want to directly admit error).

It is common in scientific writing to avoid 1st person reference as in [ii], though there has been something of a backlash against this, and many style guides for journals and publishers now recommend against using short passives and in favour of saying 'I' or 'we' when it's appropriate (*we tested twelve samples* rather than *twelve samples were tested*).

16.2.5 Lexical Restrictions

Although most active transitive clauses have passive counterparts, not all of them do. Some exceptional verbs are (either generally or in certain uses) inadmissible in passives:

- [14] i a. *The town boasts a great beach.* b. **A great beach is boasted by the town.*
 ii a. *Max totally lacks tact.* b. **Tact is totally lacked by Max.*
 iii a. *Jill has three wonderful kids.* b. **Three wonderful kids are had by Jill.*
 iv a. *The jug holds three litres.* b. **Three litres are held by the jug.*

Boast and *lack* occur only in active clauses. *Have* and *hold* occur in both active and passive clauses, but their occurrence in passives is restricted. *Have* is found in passives only in certain dynamic uses, as in *She was happy to find there was both water and gas to be had*. *Hold* occurs in passives like *It was held in place by duct tape*, but not where it means “contain”, as in [ivb].

16.2.6 Passives of Ditransitive Actives

Ditransitive clauses have two objects (see §4.3.2). Usually the passive of a ditransitive has a subject corresponding to the first one, the **indirect object**. However, some speakers (typically BrE rather than AmE) have an alternative passive construction, illustrated by [15iib], in which the subject corresponds to the **direct object** in the active ditransitive, but the passive of the construction with one object and a PP complement, as in [15iiib], is widely preferred over it:

- [15] i a. *The boss gave me the key.* b. *I was given the key by the boss.*
 ii a. *The boss gave me the key.* b. ⁹⁰*The key was given me by the boss.*
 iii a. *The boss gave the key to me.* b. *The key was given to me by the boss.*

16.2.7 Prepositional Passives

It's quite common for English grammar textbooks to state that only transitive verbs can have passives, but this is not strictly true. The subject of a passive may correspond to an object of a PP rather than of the VP. We cite short passives in [16] because they feel more natural, and as a result the [b] examples are not exactly equivalent to the actives shown in [a]:

- [16] i a. *People are looking [into the matter].* b. *The matter is being looked [into].*
 ii a. *They took advantage [of us].* b. *We were taken advantage [of].*
 iii a. *Someone has slept [in this bed].* b. *This bed has been slept [in].*

In the [b] examples the doubly underlined preposition is **stranded**: no actual complement follows it, but the missing semantic information (into what, advantage of whom, slept in what) is retrievable from the subject. Clauses of this kind are called **prepositional passives**. Two subtypes can be distinguished.

Specified Preposition

In [16i–ii] the preposition is **specified** by the preceding verb or verb-based idiom. *Look* is a prepositional verb (in the sense explained in §7.7.2) specifying *into* as preposition for the meaning “investigate”, and the idiom *take advantage* specifies *of*. This type of passive has lexical restrictions on its availability: some verbs or verbal idioms permit the prepositional passive and some don’t: ‘*look* + *into* NP’ and ‘*take advantage* + *of* NP’ permit it, but ‘*come* + *across* NP’ (meaning “encounter NP”) and ‘*lose patience* + *with* NP’ don’t permit it:

- [17] i a. *We came across some old letters.* b. **Some old letters were come across.*
 ii a. *He lost patience with the children.* b. **The children were lost patience with.*

Unspecified Preposition

In [16iii] the preposition is not specified; it has its ordinary meaning and in the active can be replaced by other prepositions: *Someone has slept under /on /near this bed*. Passives of this type are admissible only if the clause describes some significant EFFECT on the predican referent or some significant PROPERTY of it. Example [16iiib] is acceptable because sleeping in a bed affects it (that’s why we change the sheets). **This bed has been slept near*, by contrast, is not acceptable: sleeping near a bed neither affects it physically nor suggests any significant property that it might have.

What counts as a significant property may be a matter of judgement, of course. But being extremely small might well be taken as significant for a country. So it sounds reasonable to say *Nauru can be driven around in about half an hour*: if it only takes half an hour to drive right round a country’s coastline, it is a very small country indeed. On the other hand, no amount of imagination suffices to make **Los Angeles was driven around for hours* acceptable: driving aimlessly around that large conurbation neither affects it nor suggests any significant property of it.

16.2.8 Get-Passives

The passive clauses considered so far all have the auxiliary *be*; we can call them *be*-passives. There is also a passive with *get* instead of *be*:

- | | | |
|------|--|---|
| [18] | <i>be</i> -PASSIVE | <i>get</i> -PASSIVE |
| i | a. <i>Nora <u>was</u> bitten by a snake.</i> | b. <i>Nora <u>got</u> bitten by a snake.</i> |
| ii | a. <i>They <u>weren’t</u> changed until later.</i> | b. <i>They didn’t <u>get</u> changed until later.</i> |
| iii | a. <i>She <u>was</u> elected mayor in 1990.</i> | b. <i>She <u>got</u> elected mayor in 1990.</i> |
| iv | a. <i>Several shots <u>were</u> heard.</i> | b. * <i>Several shots <u>got</u> heard.</i> |

Be is an auxiliary verb, but *get* isn’t. In the negative and interrogative, therefore, *get*-passives require the dummy auxiliary *do*, as seen in [iib].

There are two important differences between *be*- and *get*-passives. First, the *be*-passive is stylistically neutral, but *get*-passives are clearly **informal** in style. Second,

get-passives semantically imply either that the predicand referent is involved in bringing the situation about or that there is some good or bad effect on the predicand referent. There are slight meaning contrasts between the [a] and [b] sentences in [i–iii]. The implication is only vaguely suggested and hard to pin down (was Nora just unfortunate in meeting that rattler, or was she doing something to provoke it?), but when such a special meaning is impossible, as with the inanimate subject case in [iv], only the *be*-passive is acceptable.

16.2.9 Bare Passives

Be-passives and *get*-passives have *be* and *get* taking past-participial complements (§14.3.4). Past-participial clauses also occur elsewhere with passive interpretation, and we call these **bare passives** because they lack the *be* and *get* markers. They can be either **complements** or **modifiers**.

Bare Passives as Complements of Transitive Verbs

A few transitive verbs license bare passives as complement. They include *have*, *get* (in a different use from that of *get*-passives), *order*, and certain perception verbs, such as *see*:

- [19] i We had the documents checked by a lawyer.
 ii You should get yourself vaccinated against measles.
 iii She ordered the records destroyed.
 iv He lived to see his son elected mayor.

Bare Passives as Modifier

As modifiers, bare passives function in the structure of nominals:

- [20] i We want a [house built after 1990].
 ii The [complaint made by her lawyer] is being investigated.

These are comparable to relative clauses in *be*-passive form: a house which was built after 1990; the complaint that was made by her lawyer.

16.2.10 Adjectival Passives

Be can be followed by an adjective, and sometimes the adjective has the same form as the past participle of a verb, but this case can be distinguished from the *be*-passive: note the ambiguity of examples like [21], which can be either *be*-passive clauses or intransitive clauses with an adjective as predicative complement.

- [21] a. Her phone was broken. b. They were married.

- As the short passive version of a transitive clause about breaking her phone, [21a] describes an **EVENT** (as in *Her phone was broken when she sat on it*). Understood

merely as a clause with an intransitive verb and an adjective, it describes a STATE resulting from an earlier event (as in *She used her computer because her phone was still broken*). Here we say that *broken* (not the whole clause!) is an adjectival passive.

- The *be*-passive reading of [b] likewise involves an event (as in *They were married in the College Chapel last Saturday*) but the ordinary intransitive interpretation again describes a state resulting from a prior event (as in *They were still happily married years later*).

Usage Controversy Note

Early in the 1900s, books on usage and style began to deprecate the passive, and recommend avoiding it. Their reasons are often spurious. Some claim that passives are clumsy and wordy, but even a long passive is only longer than the active counterpart by a maximum of two short words (*by*, plus either *be* or *get*). Short passives are usually shorter than the active counterpart would be. Others call passives dull and boring, but surely that depends on the topic and the skill of the writer.

The commonest allegation is that the passive is a sneaky and evasive device for obscuring agency and masking responsibility. But that can only be relevant to SHORT passives, and only some of them: *Mistakes were made* does sound evasive, but the same is not true of *She has been infected with a mysterious virus* (who infected her isn't relevant and probably isn't known). And the allegation doesn't apply to long passives at all. In fact long passives are ideal for focusing attention on the identity and culpability of the agent: *The bill was vetoed by the president* makes it perfectly clear who bears responsibility for the veto. It is irrational to decry a construction just because it can PERMIT description of an action without identifying the agent.

Writing guides virtually never mention the key noteworthy point about passives: they provide a way of packing older information in the subject so that newer information can be in the predicate, which can help in linking clauses within a sentence or a paragraph to improve smoothness of flow and intelligibility. Consider the sentence *The dean will not be here today; he was unfortunately gored by a bull in Pamplona yesterday*. The passive in the second clause ensures that its subject has the same reference as the first, picking up smoothly on the topic of the first clause (the dean) and presenting the unfortunate new information in the predicate. Using the active counterpart would be worse style.

The problem is that writing advisers simply condemn passive clauses wholesale, instead of explaining how to make effective use of their special properties.

The key syntactic difference between the constructions is that the adjectival passive can occur with intransitive verbs other than *be*:

- [22] a. *Her phone looked broken.* b. *They stayed married.*

Here *broken* and *married* can only have their adjectival, state interpretation.

16.3 Extraposition

Extraposition involves replacing a subordinate clause with a meaningless placeholder pronoun *it*, allowing the clause itself to appear later in the sentence.

There are actually two constructions to discuss: **subject** extraposition and **internal complement** extraposition. Subject extraposition (the one illustrated in our original example [1iia]) is more commonly encountered, so we'll deal with it first.

16.3.1 Subject Extraposition

Clauses that have a subordinate clause as their subject generally have variants with the subordinate clause at the end, still understood as the predicand, and a dummy *it* as subject:

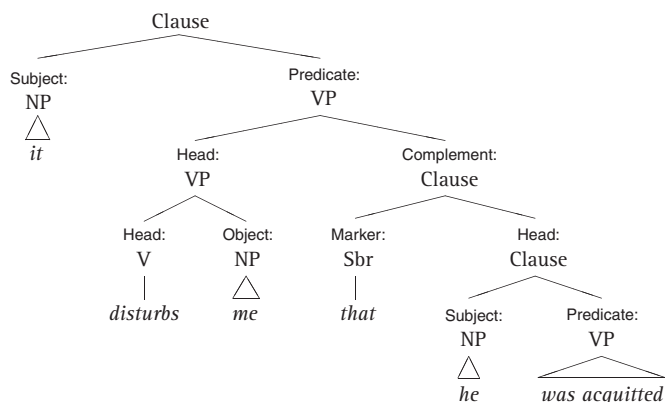
- | | BASIC VERSION | EXTRAPOSITION VERSION |
|-----|---|--|
| i | a. <u><i>That he was acquitted</i></u> disturbs me. | b. <i>It</i> disturbs me <u><i>that he was acquitted</i></u> . |
| ii | a. <u><i>How she escaped</i></u> remains a mystery. | b. <i>It</i> remains a mystery <u><i>how she escaped</i></u> . |
| iii | a. <u><i>To give up now</i></u> would be a mistake. | b. <i>It</i> would be a mistake <u><i>to give up now</i></u> . |

At least two distinctive properties of the subject outlined in §4.2.1 show that the dummy *it* must be the subject in the [6] examples:

- in declaratives, the subject normally occurs before the VP, in the basic subject position, and this is where it occurs in our examples;
- in closed interrogatives and similar constructions, the subject occurs after the auxiliary verb, and again this is where we find it in the closed interrogative counterparts, *Does it disturb her that he was acquitted?*, etc.

We call the underlined subordinate clauses in the [b] versions in [23] **extraposed subjects**, but that doesn't mean they are subjects (just as a discarded library book is not a library book and an ousted chief executive is not a chief executive). Its function in clause structure is **complement**, but it is located in an 'extraposed' position after the VP. The structure of [23ib] is shown in [24].

[24]



Extrapolation is possible only with subordinate clauses: *His letters disturbed her* does not have an extrapolation counterpart **It disturbed her his letters*. (It might seem tempting at first to think that a clause like *It's amazing the things she tolerates*, which we don't analyse here, is an example of extrapolation applying to an NP; but it's not clear that this corresponds to a basic counterpart *The things she tolerates are amazing*. The things she tolerates might be very ordinary and humdrum things like mosquitos, solicitation phone calls, and muddy footprints on the carpet. The meaning is closer to "The fact that she tolerates the things she tolerates is amazing".)

The subordinate clauses eligible to be extrapolated are predominantly declarative and interrogative content clauses, and infinitivals, as in [23i–iii] respectively. Gerund-participials are found extrapolated only with a very restricted set of matrix clauses; one example is *It's been a pleasure talking to you*.

Extrapolation Is the More Frequent and Less Constrained Case

In [23] we have labelled the version on the left as the syntactically basic one: the one on the right has the extra pronoun *it* and has a structure not found in any canonical clause. However, in pairs like these there are good reasons for regarding the version with extrapolation as the default, if not the basic version, as far as information packaging is concerned.

In the first place, it is much more common. This is because subordinate clauses tend to be heavier (longer and structurally more complex) than NPs, and there is in general a preference for placing heavy material at the end of the matrix clause, where it's easier to process.

Secondly, there are informational constraints applying to the version without extrapolation but not to the one with extrapolation, so extrapolation is acceptable in a wider range of contexts. The context for a non-extrapolated subject must permit its content to be taken as information that is familiar to the addressee.

This is where we have to broaden the concept of old information beyond that of being old relative to the discourse: we need to cover information that the addressee can be assumed to be familiar with on the basis of common knowledge. In the USA, for example, the NPs *the President* or *the Senate* refer to entities that can be regarded as familiar to the addressee even when there has been no prior mention of them in the discourse. The use of this broader concept of old information – it's really identifiability rather than actual prior mention – is illustrated in the following two passages from a scientific paper on human skin:

- [25] i *It is not easy to see, however, what positive advantages may have been responsible for human evolution toward nakedness, as compared with other primates. [It has been suggested that lack of a heavy fur may have had some adaptive value for running and hunting in the open savannas], but this is conjectural.*
- ii *In the effort to enhance its attractiveness, men and women submit their skin to systematic stretching, scraping, gouging, soaking and burning ... To give it a 'healthy' tan, the skin is ritualistically exposed to excessive and injurious doses of sunlight and wind. [That the skin survives these daily torments is a remarkable tribute to its toughness.]*

- The non-extraposed version of the bracketed clause in [i] would be completely unacceptable in the context shown here. The content of the underlined subordinate clause can't be construed as familiar to the reader, either from prior mention in the discourse or on the basis of common knowledge. The writer is introducing a new idea that might represent a positive advantage of nakedness: the subordinate clause expresses the main informational content of the bracketed matrix clause and has to be extraposed.
- In [ii], the first paragraph lists a number of 'torments' inflicted on the skin, and then we get a non-extraposed subject clause (underlined) that does represent familiar information: the reader of course knows already that our skin survives. The major new information in this sentence is that our skin's durability indicates how tough it is. That means the constraint on using the non-extraposed version is satisfied. It doesn't mean, though, that we **MUST** use the non-extraposed version. It would also be acceptable to use the default version, with extraposition: *It is a remarkable tribute to its toughness that the skin survives these daily torments.*

16.3.2 Internal Complement Extraposition

Extraposition of an internal complement is found predominantly in VPs with transitive verbs, where it is just about obligatory:

- [26] i a. **I find that he won amazing.* b. *I find it amazing that he won.*
 ii b. **She considers that I didn't notify her in advance insulting.* b. *She considers it insulting that I didn't notify her in advance.*

- The [a] versions are unacceptable and would be hard to understand, because the subordinate clause is located between the verb and a predicative complement.
- In the [b] versions, dummy *it* appears as the object and the subordinate clause as extraposed object; the subordinate clause comes after the predicative complement.

16.4 Existential Clauses

The pronoun *it* is not the only pronoun used as a dummy in English. The spelling *there* is used for two different words, one a locative preposition rhyming with *dare* and meaning “in or at that place” (as in *Put it over there*), and the other a dummy pronoun that cannot be stressed (the sentence *There is an empire* sounds exactly like the NP *the risen empire* in most people’s speech). The primary role of the dummy *there* is to fill the syntactic subject position in clauses like the [b] examples in [27], which are called **existential clauses**:

- | | | |
|------|--|---|
| [27] | BASIC VERSION | EXISTENTIAL CLAUSE |
| i | a. <i><u>A nurse</u> was always present.</i> | b. <i><u>There</u> was always <u>a nurse</u> present.</i> |
| ii | a. <i><u>Some keys</u> were near the safe.</i> | b. <i><u>There</u> were <u>some keys</u> near the safe.</i> |

There is the subject of the existential clauses in [27], just as *it* is subject in the extraposed subject construction, and the same arguments as we used to support this analysis in our commentary on [23] apply here too:

- in declaratives, *there* normally occurs before the VP, in the subject position;
- in closed interrogatives and similar constructions, it occurs after the auxiliary verb, as in *Was there always a nurse present?*, etc.

It’s significant that *there* also occurs as the subject in interrogative tags, as in:

- [28] *There was always a nurse present, wasn't there?*

All other expressions admissible in a tag like the one we have here are indisputably pronouns (cf. §10.2.4): we conclude, therefore, not only that dummy *there* is a subject, but also that it is a pronoun syntactically (though not of course semantically or morphologically).

We'll refer to *some keys* and *a nurse* in [27ib] and [27iib] as displaced subjects (though that is perhaps slightly misleading, since a displaced subject, like an extraposed subject) is NOT a kind of subject; it's an internal complement in clause structure that corresponds semantically to the subject of the syntactically more basic construction).

Dummy *there* actually is a subject, but it's a strikingly unusual kind of subject NP. It has no inherent number, but takes on the number of the displaced subject that follows the verb: *was* in [27ib] agrees with *a nurse*, and *were* in [iib] agrees with *some keys*. It's comparable to the relative pronouns *which* and *who*, which take on the number of their antecedent (*the guys who were yelling* vs *the guy who was yelling*). However, in informal style, especially in present tense declaratives with *is* reduced to 's, many speakers treat *there* as uniformly singular no matter what follows: they say ^o*There's a few protesters outside* instead of *There are a few protesters outside*. This is casual speech and does not turn up in serious writing, but the usage is far too well established to be regarded as an accidental slip.

16.4.1 Bare Existentials: *There Is a God*

One common kind of existential clause contains just dummy *there*, the verb *be*, and a displaced subject (possibly with optional adjuncts that have no bearing on the acceptability). We call these **bare existentials**. They have NO CORRESPONDING BASIC VERSION. The verb *be* normally requires an internal complement, so what would be expected as the basic counterparts corresponding to bare existentials are all ungrammatical by virtue of having no such complement:

[29]	BARE EXISTENTIAL CLAUSE	UNGRAMMATICAL BASIC VERSION
i	a. <i>There is a god.</i>	b. * <i>A god is.</i>
ii	a. <i>There are many species of spiders.</i>	b. * <i>Many species of spiders are.</i>
iii	a. <i>There has been no news of them.</i>	b. * <i>No news of them has been.</i>
iv	a. <i>There was an update.</i>	b. * <i>An update was.</i>

The general term **existential** is based on examples like [ia] and [iia] in [29], which are used to assert the existence of various things. But the existential construction described in this section covers other uses than merely talking about existence, as evident from [iiia] and [iva].

16.4.2 Extended Existentials: *There's a Café Nearby*

The existentials that do have a corresponding basic version are the ones we call **extended existentials**, which contain an additional element, the **extension**, within the VP. Some examples are given in [30], with the extension underlined.

[30]	i	LOCATIVE	<i>There's a snake <u>in the grass</u>.</i>
	ii	TEMPORAL	<i>There's another meeting <u>this afternoon</u>.</i>
	iii	PREDICATIVE ADJECTIVE	<i>There are still some seats <u>available</u>.</i>
	iv	HOLLOW INFINITIVAL	<i>There is poor old Albert <u>to consider</u>.</i>

- Locative complements as in [i] are particularly common extensions.
- Temporal extensions occur with displaced subjects that denote events (e.g., *another meeting* in [ii]).
- Predicative complement extensions are restricted to a range of adjectives denoting temporary states as in [iii] (e.g., *absent*, *available*, *missing*, *present*, *vacant*, and *wrong*, as in *There's something wrong*). Most adjectives don't occur as extensions like this: a sentence like *Some politicians are honest* doesn't have a corresponding extended existential **There are some politicians honest*.
- Infinitival extensions are hollow clauses in the sense of §14.2.4: they have a gap in internal complement function, usually object, as in [iv], where there is a missing object for *consider*: we interpret [iv] as being about consideration for poor old Albert.

16.4.3 Constraints on Basic and Existential Constructions

We showed in [29] that bare existential clauses don't have non-existential counterparts. The same is true of existentials extended by a hollow infinitival: [30iv] cannot be reformulated as **Poor old Albert is to consider*. With other kinds of extended existential we cannot make a general statement about either the existential or the non-existential version being the default: there are constraints applying to both versions. We'll briefly mention two that apply to both bare and extended existentials.

Indefinite NPs Favour Existentials

With indefinite NPs there is a PREFERENCE FOR THE EXISTENTIAL CONSTRUCTION. In fact, sometimes only the existential is acceptable:

[31]	i	a.	<i><u>A policeman</u> is here.</i>	b.	<i>There's <u>a policeman</u> here.</i>
	ii	a.	<i>*<u>Two holes</u> are in my sock.</i>	b.	<i>There are <u>two holes</u> in my sock.</i>

- In [i], both versions are possible, but the second is considerably more likely.
- In [ii], the basic version is unacceptable (this is generally the case with indefinite NPs denoting abstract entities).

Definite NPs Favour Non-Existentials

With definite NPs the preference is reversed: the NON-EXISTENTIAL IS MORE LIKELY:

[32]	a.	<i><u>Your mother</u> is here.</i>	b.	<i>?There's <u>your mother</u> here.</i>
------	----	------------------------------------	----	--

Displaced subjects – which you'll recall are not actually syntactic subjects – are presented as information that is **new** TO THE ADDRESSEE. Definite NPs tend to be associated with **old** information, so the [b] version, with definite *your mother* displaced is hardly possible (many linguists would mark [32b] with an asterisk): there's no apparent reason for departing from the canonical [a] construction. However, definite NPs certainly do not always represent old information, and when a definite NP introduces new information it may be acceptable as a displaced subject in the existential construction. Here's a clear example:

- [33] A: *Who could we get to give a lecture on intonation?*
 B: *Well, [there's Professor Sachs,] I suppose.*

Professor Sachs is a definite NP, but speaker A has not mentioned this person, so B's suggestion comes as new information: B is introducing Sachs's name into the conversation for the first time, as a suggestion to consider.

16.4.4 Presentationals: *There Appeared an Angel*

A construction similar to the existential, known as a **presentational** clause, has dummy *there* as the subject not of *be* but of an intransitive verb such as *appear*, *arise*, *emerge*, *exist*, *follow*, or *remain*:

- [34] a. *Many problems remain.* b. *There remain many problems.*

One difference from existentials is that in presentationals the displaced subject is often right at the end of the clause, after any adjuncts in the VP, as in *There emerged in Russia a desire to restore its former position on the world stage*.

16.5 The *It*-Cleft Construction

We turn now to a number of information-packaging constructions not illustrated in the introduction to the chapter, beginning with the *it*-cleft construction. This generally provides more than one variant of the corresponding non-cleft clause – at least one for each NP, in fact:

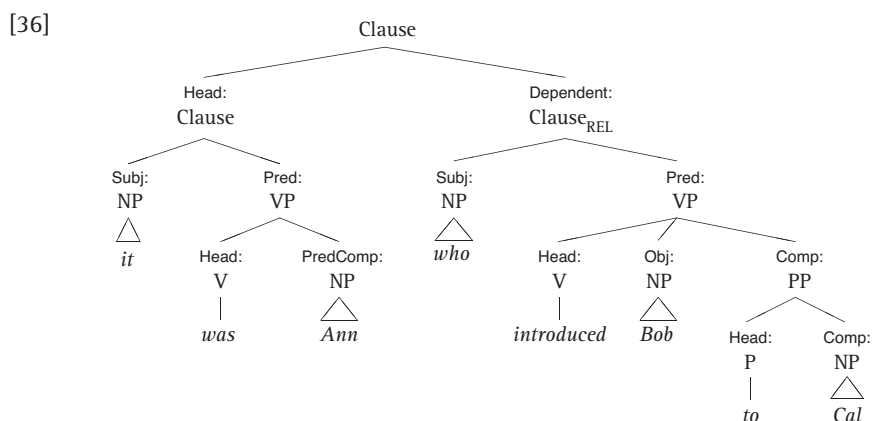
- | | | | |
|------|--------------------------------------|---|---|
| [35] | NON-CLEFT | { | <i>it</i> -CLEFT
b. <i>It was <u>Ann</u> who <u>introduced Bob to Cal</u>.</i>
c. <i>It was <u>Bob</u> who <u>Ann introduced to Cal</u>.</i>
d. <i>It was <u>Cal</u> who <u>Ann introduced Bob to</u>.</i> |
| | a. <i>Ann introduced Bob to Cal.</i> | | |

(The names begin with A, B, and C here deliberately, so that you can see the permutations that are possible: one example has ABC, another has BAC, and a third has CAB.)

To form an *it*-cleft clause from a syntactically more basic non-cleft we divide it into two parts (hence the ‘cleft’ component in the name). One part, marked here by double underlining, is **foregrounded**, while the other (single underlining) is **backgrounded**. In [b] the subject of the basic version is foregrounded; in [c], the object; and in [d], the complement of the *to* PP.

16.5.1 Syntactic Structure of the *It*-Cleft

The foregrounded element functions in the *it*-cleft version as a complement licensed by the verb *be*. The subject is invariably *it*, a meaningless dummy pronoun. The backgrounded part is expressed as a relative clause, with the foregrounded element as antecedent for the relativized element, here *who* (see §12.1.2). So the structure of [35b] is as follows:



The relative clause is of the integrated type (see §12.2), but it's not a dependent of *Ann*: the words *Ann who introduced Bob to Cal* do NOT form a syntactic constituent. In an ordinary integrated relative like *the [person who introduced Bob to Cal]*, the bracketed sequence does form a constituent – it's a nominal. This means that there can be ambiguity between *it*-clefts and clauses containing ordinary integrated relatives. For example, this sentence is ambiguous:

[37] *It was the song that impressed them.*

- This can be an *it*-cleft version of *The song impressed them*, with the *it* being a dummy pronoun and *the song* foregrounded. With this meaning, the sentence might be used to answer the question *What impressed the record company?* – the answer being that it was the songwriting, not the quality of the demo or the singer's voice.
- But the example can also have the structure and interpretation of a non-cleft clause, with *it* an ordinary anaphoric pronoun referring to something previously mentioned (and typically replaceable by *that*). With this meaning, [37] could be used as an answer to *Why was that the track they released as a single?* – the answer being

simply that it was the one track on the album they found impressive. Here *it* has *that* song as antecedent, and *the song that impressed them* DOES form a constituent.

16.5.2 The Foregrounded Element

In our initial example, [35b–d], the foregrounded element was an NP whose function in the corresponding non-cleft clause was subject, object, and object complement of a PP respectively. There are many other possibilities, a few of which are illustrated in [38] (where the relative clauses are of the non-*wh* type):

[38]	NON-CLEFT	<i>it</i> -CLEFT
i	a. They think <u>you</u> should leave.	b. It's <u>you</u> they think should leave.
ii	a. Ann introduced Bob <u>to Cal</u> .	b. It was <u>to Cal</u> that Ann introduced Bob.
iii	a. He signed it <u>with this pen</u> .	b. It was <u>with this pen</u> that he signed it.
iv	a. Jo doesn't <u>often</u> skip a class.	b. It isn't <u>often</u> that Jo skips a class.
v	a. I resigned <u>to avoid disgrace</u> .	b. It was <u>to avoid disgrace</u> that I resigned.

- In [ia] *you* is subject of an **embedded content clause** (*you should leave* is complement of the *think* VP).
- In [iia] *to Cal* is a PP in **complement** function; [iib] is a variant of [35d], more formal in style, avoiding the stranded preposition; see §7.5.
- The underlined elements in the other [a] examples – a PP, an adverb, and a non-finite clause respectively – are all **adjuncts** of various kinds.

This wide range of possibilities further distinguishes this type of relative clause from the prototypical type that modifies a nominal. For example, *that he signed the bill* in [iiib] couldn't occur as modifier with *pen*: we couldn't say **This is [the pen that he signed the bill]* (we'd need to include a stranded preposition: *This is [the pen that he signed the bill with]*).

16.5.3 Backgrounded Element as Presupposition

The effect of backgrounding is to present the information in question as a **presupposition** – information that is taken for granted, its truth not being at issue. In [38ib] I take it for granted that they think someone should leave and assert that you're the one they have in mind. And in [38iib] it is not at issue whether Ann introduced Bob to someone: the question is *WHO* she introduced him to.

Presuppositions are normally not affected when we negate the containing construction, and this is the source of a sharp difference between clefts and their non-cleft counterparts:

[39]	a. Ann didn't introduce Bob to Cal.	b. It wasn't to Cal that Ann introduced Bob.
------	-------------------------------------	--

The non-cleft [a] simply denies that Ann introduced Bob to Cal: it doesn't convey that she introduced Bob to someone else. The cleft [b] is different: the presupposition that Ann introduced Bob to someone stands, and what's denied is that Cal was that person.

In likely uses of all the examples considered so far, the presupposition will be *old* information, introduced into the prior discourse or inferable from it. The natural context for [38iib] and [39b], for example, is one where Ann has been said to have introduced Bob to someone, so that this is old information.

But it is not a necessary feature of an *it*-cleft that the backgrounded material should represent old information: it may also introduce *new* information into the discourse. An example of this much less usual case is the second sentence in [40]:

- [40] *The Islamic world was central to the preservation of ancient Greek thought. It was Muslim scholars who translated and taught Greek mathematics and philosophy.*

The natural context here is one where the speaker is introducing into the discourse the information expressed in the underlined relative clause in order to illustrate ways in which the Arabs preserved important ideas. The information is new, but it is still presupposed. That the ancient Greek ideas survived is not at issue in this passage: the important point is that the Muslim scholars kept them alive through translation and teaching.

16.6 Pseudo-Clefts

The *pseudo-cleft* is quite similar to the *it*-cleft in some ways: again we have a division between foregrounded and backgrounded elements, with the backgrounded material representing presupposed information. But in the case of the pseudo-cleft, the backgrounded material is placed in a *fused relative* construction:

- | | | |
|------|--------------------------------------|---|
| [41] | NON-CLEFT | PSEUDO-CLEFT |
| i | a. <i>We need more time.</i> | b. <i><u>What we need</u> is <u>more time.</u></i> |
| ii | a. <i>He claims he was insulted.</i> | b. <i><u>What he claims</u> is <u>that he was insulted.</u></i> |
| iii | a. <i>I'll postpone the meeting.</i> | b. <i><u>What I'll do</u> is <u>postpone the meeting.</u></i> |

Again we use single underlining for the backgrounded element and double underlining for the foregrounded one. The backgrounded material forms a fused relative construction in the sense explained in §12.4 (compare *what we need* with the non-fused relative *that which we need*). This fused relative clause represents presupposed information like the non-fused relative clause in the *it*-cleft construction. In [ib], for example, I take it for granted that we need something and assert that that something is more time. As before, the presupposition normally survives negation: if I say

What we need is not more time, it's some fresh ideas, I'm still taking it for granted that we need something.

16.6.1 The Foregrounded Element

There is only partial overlap between the elements that can be foregrounded in the pseudo-cleft and those that can be in the *it*-cleft. We could have an *it*-cleft instead of [41b] (*It's more time that we need*), but not the others (**It is that he was insulted that he claims*, **It's postpone the meeting that I'll do*). Pseudo-clefts accept subordinate clauses as foregrounded element much more readily than *it*-clefts do.

Who, on the other hand, is not normally found in fused relatives in present-day usage, so pseudo-clefts don't allow foregrounding of personal NPs: we don't find **Who introduced Bob to Cal was Ann*. Instead, we use an *it*-cleft or a non-fused relative construction such as *The person who introduced Bob to Cal was Ann*.

16.6.2 Pseudo-Clefts and Specifying *Be*

The pseudo-cleft is really just a particular case of the specifying *be* construction discussed in §4.4.3. As usual, subject and complement can be reversed, giving *More time is what we need*, and so on.

Note also that the pseudo-cleft is less systematically related to non-clefts than the *it*-cleft. There are cases of pseudo-clefts with no non-cleft counterparts:

- | | | |
|------|---|--|
| [42] | PSEUDO-CLEFT | NON-CLEFT |
| i | a. <i>What I object to is that he lied.</i> | b. <i>*I object to that he lied.</i> |
| ii | a. <i>What I like about her is that she always means what she says.</i> | b. <i>*I like about her that she always means what she says.</i> |

16.7 Dislocation: *He's clever, your dad*

There is a different construction used in informal spoken English for locating a chosen NP earlier or later than it would have been in some sentence structures. We refer to it as **dislocation**. It involves an extra NP located to the left or right of the main part of the clause. We'll call the main part the **nucleus** (though being a nucleus is just a special case of being a head). The key thing about dislocations is that the nucleus still consists of a full subject and predicate, but with a **personal pronoun** inside it somewhere, taking the extra NP as its antecedent. Here are some examples, alongside their non-dislocated counterparts:

- | | | |
|------|---|--|
| [43] | NON-DISLOCATED CLAUSE | DISLOCATED CLAUSE |
| i | a. <i>One of my cousins recently had triplets.</i> | b. <i>One of my cousins, she recently had triplets.</i> |
| ii | a. <i>I think the man next door's car was stolen.</i> | b. <i>The man next door, I think his car was stolen.</i> |
| iii | a. <i>Her father can be very judgemental.</i> | b. <i>He can be very judgemental, her father.</i> |

Examples [ib] and [iib] illustrate **left dislocation**: the extra NP is positioned to the left of the clause nucleus. Example [iiib] has **right dislocation**, with the extra NP on the end like an afterthought to expand on the meaning of the pronoun.

Both kinds of dislocation are characteristic of relatively informal style, such as conversation, especially oral personal narrative. They can be slightly easier to understand than their basic counterpart, for several reasons.

- Left dislocation may put a complex NP early in the sentence, replacing it with a pronoun in the nucleus, so the nucleus is structurally simpler. (Notice that in [43iib] the determiner in the dislocated version is simply the genitive pronoun *his*, whereas in [43iia] it is the more complex genitive NP *the man next door's*.)
- Right dislocation often has an NP that clarifies the reference of the pronoun retrospectively. You can imagine, for example, that [43iiib] might have been uttered following *Tom didn't have the courage to tell her father*: repeating the NP *her father* would make it clear that *he* refers to the judgemental father, not Tom.

16.7.1 Extraposition Is Not Right Dislocation

The extraposition construction discussed in §16.3 above might look superficially like a special case of right dislocation, but in fact it isn't. The differences are as follows:

- In dislocation the NP placed to the left or right of the nucleus is set apart prosodically from the rest of the clause, with a slight pause, but extraposition clauses usually have a smooth and unbroken intonation pattern.
- The *it* of extraposition is a dummy, not a referential pronoun like the *he* of [43iiib]. The extraposed clause doesn't 'clarify the reference' of *it*: the *it* has no reference. If the extraposed clause were omitted, the speaker's intended meaning would normally be completely lost. The right dislocation [43iiib], by contrast, would make sense even without the final NP.
- Extraposition is stylistically quite neutral, and occurs in literary prose, whereas right dislocation, as we said above, belongs almost entirely to informal style.

16.8 Preposing and Postposing

All the information-packaging constructions considered so far in this chapter differ structurally from their syntactically more elementary counterpart in a way which involves a difference in the function of one or more element:

- a passive clause has a subject corresponding to the object (of the verb or of a preposition) in the active clause, while the subject of the active is either missing (in short passives) or corresponds to the complement in a *by* PP (long passives);
- a cleft clause has as a complement of the *be* VP a foregrounded element that can have a range of functions within the non-cleft counterpart;
- extraposition and existentials have extraposed and displaced subjects;
- dislocation involves extra elements located to the left or right of the clause nucleus.

In this section we review some constructions where it is not so clear that there are changes to the syntactic functions in the clause; rather, a constituent with a given function appears in a different position from its basic one. We look in turn at **preposing**, **postposing**, and two kinds of **inversion**.

- [44]
- | | | | |
|-----|------------|--|--|
| i | PREPOSING | <u>Some of them</u> he hadn't even read. | |
| ii | POSTPOSING | I understood eventually <u>the reason for their antagonism</u> . | |
| iii | INVERSION | { a. <u>Never had I</u> felt so alone. [subject-auxiliary inversion]
b. <u>In the drawer</u> was <u>a gun</u> . [subject-dependent inversion] | |

- **Preposing** involves putting an element at the front of a construction when its basic position is later. In [i] the object *some of them* is placed at the front of the clause, whereas its basic position is after the verb, as in *He hadn't even read some of them*.
- **Postposing** involves putting an element at or near the end of the clause rather than in the earlier position that would be the default place for a constituent with the same function. In [ii] *the reason for their antagonism* is the object, and the default place for objects is after the verb, as in *I understood her reasoning eventually*.
- In [iii] there is **inversion** of subject and auxiliary verb following fronted *never*.
- The inversion in [iiib] combines preposing (of a PP) and postposing (of the subject NP).

16.8.1 Preposing

The contrast between basic order and preposing is seen in such pairs as the following:

- | | | |
|------|---|--|
| [45] | BASIC ORDER | PREPOSING |
| i | a. <i>I wasn't allowed to watch TV <u>when I was at school</u>.</i> | b. <i><u>When I was at school</u>, I wasn't allowed to watch TV.</i> |
| ii | a. <i>I said he could have <u>the others</u>.</i> | b. <i><u>The others</u> I said he could have.</i> |
| iii | a. <i>They accepted <u>that</u>.</i> | b. <i><u>That</u>, they accepted.</i> |
| iv | a. <i>Mr Brown is not <u>humble</u>.</i> | b. <i><u>Humble</u>, Mr Brown is not.</i> |
| v | a. <i>I said I'd pay for it, [<u>and I will pay for it</u>].</i> | b. <i>I said I'd pay for it, and [<u>pay for it I will</u>].</i> |

The preposed element in [ib] is an **adjunct** (specifically, a supplement). Preposing of adjuncts occurs relatively freely. In the other examples it is a **complement** that is preposed. This is more constrained; a preposed complement serves as a link to the preceding discourse, and must be closely related to information previously introduced:

- In [iib], *the others* refers to some set of things left over from a set already mentioned.
- The context for [iiib] would typically be one where the referent of *that* has just been mentioned: *They didn't like the first draft, but I wrote a new and shorter one. That, they accepted.*
- The original full version of [ivb] was this: *His humility must have been invented by the adman, for humble, Mr Brown is not.* So *humble* relates to the earlier mention of humility.
- In the [b] example of [v] the bracketed clause illustrates a special case of complement preposing that occurs with complements licensed by auxiliary verbs. Typically it serves to emphasize the truth of what is being asserted.

16.8.2 Postposing

Further examples of postposing are given in [46], along with their default order counterparts:

- | | | |
|------|--|--|
| [46] | BASIC ORDER | POSTPOSING |
| i | a. <i>They brought <u>an extraordinarily lavish lunch</u> with them.</i> | b. <i>They brought with them <u>an extraordinarily lavish lunch</u>.</i> |
| ii | a. <i>A man <u>whom I'd never seen before</u> came in.</i> | b. <i>A man came in <u>whom I'd never seen before</u>.</i> |

The postposed element is an object in [ib] (as in [44ii]), and a dependent (an integrated relative clause functioning as modifier) in the subject NP in [iib].

The major factor leading to the choice of a postposing construction is relative **weight**. Weight of constituents is primarily a matter of length and complexity. In [46i] the object NP is quite heavy in comparison with the PP complement *with them*, and for this reason can readily be put at the end of the clause instead of in the default object position immediately after the verb. There are two points to note here:

- In the first place, if the object were simply *lunch* then the basic order would normally be required.
- On the other hand, if we lengthened it to something like *an extraordinarily lavish lunch that their daughter had helped them prepare*, then postposing would be more or less obligatory.

A postposed element occurs in a position that tends to receive greater phonological prominence and where complex material is easier to process. Extraposition is syntactically distinct from postposing in that it introduces the dummy pronoun *it* into the structure, but it shares with postposing the effect of positioning heavy material (a subordinate clause) at the end of the matrix clause.

16.8.3 Subject-Auxiliary Inversion

[47]	BASIC ORDER	SUBJECT-AUXILIARY INVERSION
i a.	<u>The pain</u> <u>was</u> <u>so bad</u> <u>that I fainted</u> .	b. <u>So bad</u> <u>was</u> <u>the pain</u> <u>that I fainted</u> .
ii a.	<u>I realized</u> <u>my mistake</u> <u>only later</u> .	b. <u>Only later</u> <u>did I</u> <u>realize my mistake</u> .

This type of inversion, as the name implies, requires the presence of an auxiliary verb. If there is no auxiliary in the basic order version, then dummy *do* is inserted, as in [iib] (see §3.2.1).

Subject-auxiliary inversion is found in a considerable range of constructions, some of which have nothing to do with information packaging – most obviously the closed interrogative construction, with inversion distinguishing interrogative *Is it ready?* from declarative *It is ready* (§10.2.2). Here, though, we're concerned with subject-auxiliary inversion as an accompaniment of preposing. In the examples given, subject-auxiliary inversion is triggered by the preposing of *so bad* and *only later*. The main elements that trigger inversion like this include:

- negative adjuncts, as in [44iiia] (Never had I felt so alone);
- expressions containing *so* or *only*, as in [47], or in *Brad is resigning, and so am I*.
- similar forms with *such*: Such a fuss did they make that we abandoned the idea.

16.8.4 Subject-Dependent Inversion

[48]	BASIC ORDER	SUBJECT-DEPENDENT INVERSION
i a.	<u>A bowl of fruit</u> <u>was</u> <u>on her desk</u> .	b. <u>On her desk</u> <u>was</u> <u>a bowl of fruit</u> .
ii a.	<u>The view from the top</u> <u>is</u> <u>even better</u> .	b. <u>Even better</u> <u>is</u> <u>the view from the top</u> .

This time the elements inverted are the subject and another dependent of the verb. The latter is usually a complement – most commonly a locative or an adjectival predicative complement, as in [48]. The verb is most often *be*, but other verbs of relatively little informational content, such as *appear*, *lie*, *sit*, etc., are also found.

This type of inversion means that the subject arrives last, where it typically receives greater phonological prominence than in its basic position. It very often represents new information, and we will not normally have inversion if the subject is old and the dependent new. Compare [a] and [b] in [49], where the version with old followed by new is completely natural while the one with new followed by old is quite unnatural:

[49]	OLD	NEW	NEW	OLD
a.	<u>In the drawer</u>	was	<u>a gun.</u>	b.
	<u>?In a drawer</u>	was	<u>the gun.</u>	

To get [49b] to seem natural you would need to imagine a special context, where the gun had been mentioned earlier but the hiding place in the drawer hadn't.

16.9 Reduction

In this final section we review very briefly a number of constructions where a constituent representing old information is reduced to a pronoun or similar form, or else omitted altogether. We use **ellipsis** for the complete omission of old information, and introduce the term **pro-form** in place of 'pronoun or similar word capable of standing in place for the meaning of something else':

[50]	i <i>I'd like to go with you but I can't __.</i>	[ellipsis: VP omitted]
	ii <i>Wow, __ hardly recognized myself!</i>	[ellipsis: NP omitted]
	iii <i>My father said <u>he</u> would help you.</i>	[pro-form: NP reduced]
	iv <i>I told him to get out, and he <u>did so</u>.</i>	[pro-form: VP reduced]

- In [i], the VP *can't* is understood as "can't go with you"; the missing infinitival complement is recoverable from the preceding clause. The concepts of **anaphora** and **antecedent** can be generalized to cover such cases of ellipsis (cf. §5.8.1): the elided complement is anaphoric to the antecedent *go with you* in the first clause.
- In [ii] a 1st-person subject pronoun is omitted; this happens in very casual speech.
- In the salient interpretation of [iii] it's about my father helping you: the pronoun *he* is anaphoric to the antecedent *my father*.
- In [iv] a VP understood with the same meaning as a predicate with an action verb in the previous clause is replaced by the anaphoric expression *did so*.

16.9.1 Pro-Form versus Pronoun

The reason why we need the term 'pro-form' as well as 'pronoun' can be seen from such examples [50iv]. Notice, in fact, that the two are completely independent:

[51]			PRONOUN?	PRO-FORM?
i	A: <i>Was she arrested?</i>	B: <i>I'm afraid <u>so</u>.</i>	No	Yes
ii	<i><u>It's</u> time to go.</i>	<i><u>Who</u> broke the vase?</i>	Yes	No

- In [i], *so* is a pro-form (interpreted anaphorically as “she was arrested”), but it isn’t a pronoun. It couldn’t be: *afraid* licenses a clause as a complement (*I’m afraid she was arrested*) but not any kind of NP (**I’m afraid her fate*; **I’m afraid it*).
- In [ii], *it* and *who* are pronouns: they head NPs in subject position and do not permit determiners. But they are not pro-forms: they do not represent old information retrievable in full from the context.

16.9.2 Reduction of NPs

There are three main types of reduction to consider under this heading.

Personal Pronouns

This is the central case illustrated in [50ii]; it was discussed in §5.8.1 and needs no further discussion.

The Pro-Forms *One* and *Others*

[52] *She left us six pears; this one is riper than the others /the other ones.*

These forms always have a **count** interpretation, and unlike pronouns they have an antecedent that is not a full NP: in this example it is *pears*, not *six pears*. Syntactically they are common nouns, not pronouns.

- They differ from pronouns in that they take determiners, such as *this* and *the* in [52].
- They are like prototypical common nouns in having an inflectional contrast between singular *one* /*other* and plural *ones* /*others*, marked as such by the plural suffix *-s*.

The Fused Head Construction

The constructions that we’ve called the **simple** and **implicit partitive** uses of the fused head construction (§5.7.1) are generally interpreted anaphorically:

- [53] i *I need some ink, but I can’t find any.*
 ii *I had put some mangoes on the table and as usual Max took the largest.*

The fused determiner-head *any* is interpreted anaphorically as “any ink” and the fused modifier-head *largest* as “largest of them”, i.e., “largest of the mangoes”. Again, these are pro-forms – mostly determinatives and adjectives – not pronouns.

16.9.3 Reduction of Clauses, VPs, and Other Phrases

Clause Reduction

- [54]
- i *He says Jill informed the press, but that can't be true.*
 - ii *She may change her mind, but I doubt it.*
 - iii *I'm not sure I'll finish today, but I hope so.*
 - iv *She's coming round to see us, but she didn't say when ____.*

- Noun phrases such as *that*, *this*, and *it* can have clauses rather than NPs as antecedent, as in [i–ii].
- *So* can serve as a kind of ‘pro-clause’, as in [iii] and [51i] above. It functions mainly as internal complement licensed by such verbs as *believe*, *think*, *seem* (as in *It seems so*), etc.
- In [iv], we see ellipsis of everything but the initial phrase of an interrogative content clause.

VP Reduction

- [55]
- i *He suggested we put the house on the market, but I don't want to do that yet.*
 - ii *She drove us to the station, but she did so reluctantly.*
 - iii *Ed isn't ready, but I am _____. Come if you can _____. I saw it and Pat did ____ too.*
 - iv *You can come with us if you want to ____.*
 - v *I don't promise to get it finished today, but I'll try ____.*
 - vi *They asked me who informed the press, but I don't know ____.*

- The NPs *this*, *that*, and *it* can combine with the lexical verb *do* to form a ‘pro-VP’; *do that* in [i] is interpreted anaphorically as “put the house on the market”.
- *So* combines with *do* in a similar way: *did so* in [ii] is understood as “drove us to the station”.
- The examples in [iii] involve the ellipsis of the complement of a VP headed by an auxiliary verb. This is another construction (beyond those involving subject–auxiliary inversion and negation introduced in §3.2.1) where the dummy auxiliary verb *do* is used if there would not otherwise be an auxiliary verb present. In the third example, *Pat saw it too* is reduced to *Pat did ____ too*. The dummy *do* may also be needed when stress is used to emphasize that a clause is positive, not negative: *But I HAVE told you*. Dummy *do* is needed if there is no other auxiliary to carry the stress: *But I DID tell you!* (contrasting with non-emphatic *I told you*).
- In [iv], we have ellipsis of a VP following the infinitival marker *to*.
- A relatively small number of lexical verbs allow ellipsis of their entire non-finite complement: *try* in [v] is understood as “try to get it finished today”.
- Similarly, some verbs, such as *know* in [vi], permit ellipsis of a content clause complement: “I don't know who informed the press”.

Pro-Forms for Predicative Complements and Locative PPs

- [56] i *She was an excellent manager, or at least she seemed so.*
 ii *He was born in Boston and lived there all his life.*

- *So* has other anaphoric uses than those mentioned above; in particular, it can function as predicative complement, allowing a variety of categories of antecedent, such as the AdjP *extremely bright*, or the NP *an excellent manager* as in [i].
- The preposition *there* is commonly used anaphorically with a locative expression as antecedent, as in [ii]. It can also be used deictically, as in *Just put it over there*.

Exercises on Chapter 16

- For each of the main clauses below, say whether it is **canonical** or **non-canonical**. If it's non-canonical, say which aspect of its structure makes it so.
 - It doesn't matter anymore.*
 - That'll be the day.*
 - I'm looking for someone to love.*
 - It's so lucky that you found me.*
 - I want money.*
 - Do you love me?*
 - What a time we had.*
 - What's wrong with me?*
 - I feel so bad.*
 - This sort of thing I have no patience with.*
- Classify the **main** clauses of the following examples with respect to **voice**, saying for each whether it's **active** or **passive**.
 - A new shop opened up in Jerusalem today.*
 - New shops often get opened up in Jerusalem.*
 - Someone opened up a new shop in Jerusalem.*
 - A new shop was opened up in Jerusalem.*
 - They opened up a new shop in Jerusalem.*
 - Was a new shop opened up in Jerusalem today?*
 - The opening was planned by an unknown artistic collaborative.*
 - An unknown artistic collaborative is responsible.*
 - An unknown artistic collaborative is thought to be responsible.*
 - An unknown artistic collaborative is thought by the media to be responsible.*
- For each of the following **active** clauses, if it has a **passive** counterpart, supply it; if not, do your best to give a general statement of why this sort of clause doesn't have a passive. (For example, if given *Jim remains chair* you

might say that *chair* is a bare role NP functioning as predicative complement, which is why there can be no corresponding passive clause **Chair is remained by Jim.*)

- i *The weather made our holiday a delight.*
 - ii *The secretary gave a copy of the report to all board members.*
 - iii *Both her children have malaria.*
 - iv *One of the guests sat on my glasses.*
 - v *My sister lives just around the corner.*
 - vi *Your letter arrived this morning.*
 - vii *Most people believe them to be genuine.*
 - viii *Your new proposal looks a real improvement on the last one.*
 - ix *The college awarded her a prize.*
 - x *We supported each other in school when things got tough.*
4. Express each of these examples with all clauses entirely in the active voice.
- i *I was robbed by bandits on the way to class and my homework was stolen.*
 - ii *It is clear that your goldfish has been poisoned by one of your enemies.*
 - iii *'You should have that looked at by an expert,' I was told by all my friends.*
 - iv *Today I was hit by the bad news that we're being shut down by the police.*
 - v *She went swimming and was attacked by a crocodile.*
5. [Supplementary exercise] Provide counterparts of each of the following clauses (from a TEDGlobal talk by Sheena Iyengar) with the underlined head verbs changed into the passive.
- i If a choice affects you, then you should be the one to make it. This is the only way to ensure that other people account for your preferences and interests.
 - ii *The first group came in, and Miss Smith, who showed them six big piles of anagram puzzles, greeted them.*
 - iii *When the second group of children came in, somebody brought them to the same room and showed them the same anagrams, but this time Miss Smith told them which anagrams to do and which markers to write their answers with.*
 - iv *In reality, somebody gave the kids who Miss Smith or their mothers told what to do the very same activity, which their counterparts in the first group had freely chosen.*
 - v *It didn't matter who did the choosing; if another dictated the task, their performance suffered.*
 - vi *In fact, some of the kids were visibly embarrassed when a researcher told them that the researchers had consulted their mothers.*

- vii *Their immigrant parents' approach to choice strongly influenced the first-generation children.*
 - viii *The assumption then that we do best when the individual self chooses only holds when we clearly divide that self from others.*
 - ix *For modern Americans who expose themselves to more options and more ads that we associate with options than anyone else in the world, choice is just as much about who they are as it is about what the product is.*
 - x *The new economy flooded them with choice before they could protest that they didn't know how to swim.*
6. For each of the following, say whether it is (a) a passive clause, i.e., a *be*-passive or a *get*-passive; (b) an active clause with an **adjectival passive** as complement; or (c) **ambiguous** between the two. For the ambiguous cases, describe the difference in meaning.
- i *The farm was surrounded by troops.*
 - ii *The rod was magnetized.*
 - iii *The motion was carried unanimously.*
 - iv *One of the letters wasn't signed.*
 - v *Several people were injured during the demonstration.*
 - vi *I got bitten by the neighbours' dog.*
 - vii *They got reprimanded for it.*
 - viii *They were lost.*
 - ix *They got dressed.*
 - x *One of the letters didn't get signed.*
7. For each of the following, say whether the counterpart we specify has the same meaning as the cited example.
- i *Two different measures can be used to assess test reliability.* (canonical counterpart)
 - ii *Few votes are taken whereby decisions are arrived at by consensus.* (canonical counterpart)
 - iii *These results are presented in Table 3.* (canonical counterpart)
 - iv *Some people are born to be chefs.* (canonical counterpart)
 - v *No position is supported by everyone.* (canonical counterpart)
 - vi *If someone isn't ready, you can't do anything.* (existential counterpart)
 - vii *A shortage isn't a big problem.* (existential counterpart)
 - viii *A shortage isn't a big problem.* (*it*-cleft counterpart)
 - ix *They weigh the same amount.* (passive counterpart)
 - x *500 shares changed hands.* (passive counterpart)
8. Which of the following strings can form prepositional passives? Construct a plausible example for each one where it's possible.

- i *account for*
- ii *accuse of*
- iii *base on*
- iv *call for*
- v *deal with*
- vi *discriminate against*
- vii *expose to*
- viii *pay for*
- ix *reckon with*
- x *talk about*

9. For each underlined clause, give an extraposed counterpart if one is available, or if none is available, try to explain why.
- i Why you put up with it is incomprehensible.
 - ii It isn't clear to me whether he was even listening.
 - iii The fact that they are married should make no difference.
 - iv It feels good to be back in my home town.
 - v For you to do that would be deeply unethical.
 - vi I appreciate that you returned it sincerely.
 - vii That I should have to clean it all up seems a bit unfair.
 - viii I'm afraid fussing about the pain is no use.
 - ix Why she had to do that will always be a mystery.
 - x Meeting you and your family has been a great pleasure.
10. Classify the following existentials as bare, locative, temporal, predicative, or hollow infinitival.
- i *There are no mountains on the surface of Saturn.*
 - ii *There being no other safer alternatives, the drug was given a green light.*
 - iii *There was no lightning recorded in the area during the weeks in question.*
 - iv *There wasn't enough time to steal anything.*
 - v *There were other assertions that we had previously debunked.*
 - vi *There's a lot of energy in outer space.*
 - vii *There's an in-bar field test coming up tonight.*
 - viii *There's more to know about Corrigan.*
 - ix *There's nothing to keep me from destroying these crystals.*
 - x *There's nothing wrong with what Avery's doing.*
11. Give existential or presentational counterparts of the following clauses if they are available. If none is available explain why.
- i *Carpentry tools are available for your use.*
 - ii *A friend of yours is on the phone.*

- iii *His wife was very rich.*
 - iv *Only one doctor was present.*
 - v *Several important points emerged.*
 - vi *A person came riding over the hill.*
 - vii *The sun came rising over the hill.*
 - viii *One key was missing.*
 - ix *Something is wrong with the battery.*
 - x *Is your job available?*
12. Give **non-existential** counterparts of the following clauses if one is available, and where none is available explain why.
- i *There's a serious mistake in your argument.*
 - ii *There were two students on the committee.*
 - iii *There's nothing to worry about.*
 - iv *There had been a violent demonstration against the new bill.*
 - v *There's no doubt that he's the main culprit.*
13. For each of the following, give an *it*-cleft counterpart with the same truth conditions, with the underlined constituent as the foregrounded element.
- i *I blame you.*
 - ii *Most of the leaf growth occurs in the spring.*
 - iii *They left the campground only reluctantly.*
 - iv *George took the Volvo.*
 - v *I liked the other one most.*
14. Identify the category of the foregrounded element in each of the following.
- i *It is naming which separates us.*
 - ii *It is this same fear which drives this pathological desire to own guns.*
 - iii *It was Jabo who took it upon himself to sneak into villages at night.*
 - iv *It was professional historians who raised the alarm.*
 - v *It was then that Anne joined the company.*
 - vi *It was to learn more about cheetahs that I dropped in on JK.*
 - vii *It was to these people that her father spoke.*
 - viii *It wasn't until that moment that she realized she had never prepared him.*
 - ix *It's not for nothing that there weren't any people on a single one of her embroideries.*
 - x *It's the ones who are going to deliver the pizza that will get the money.*
15. Which of the following are *it* clefts?
- i *It is clear that this region correlates with the expression of active genes.*
 - ii *It is my opinion that the market can be restored.*
 - iii *It is to reassure themselves that they have enough, that the people do this.*

- iv *It is well known that some neurons are bistable.*
 - v *It was also here that I viewed 193 Herschel objects on 44 nights.*
 - vi *It was at this time that we began to wake in the night.*
 - vii *It was Pride that was getting the alerts.*
 - viii *It's in those moments that I feel a part of something bigger.*
 - ix *It's just that they would avoid each other.*
 - x *It's to warn everyone that the contagion has gotten loose.*
16. For each of the following, give a **pseudo-cleft** with the same truth conditions, with the underlined constituent as the foregrounded element (see §16.6.2).
- i *The absurd waste of it all* bothers me.
 - ii *Most of the leaf growth* occurs in the spring.
 - iii *The backgrounded material* gets put in the fused relative construction.
 - iv George took *the Volvo*.
 - v I liked *the music* most.

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